

THE INDIAN STATES SERIES.

# PROGRESSIVE TRAVANCORE

BY

S. Ramanath Aiyar F. S. Sc. (London.)

Prof. D. S. Sathar m. a.

with the author's complete

Revision

THE INDIAN STATES SERIES.

# Progressive Travancore.

6/19  
7/19

BY

S. Ramanath Aiyar F. S. Sc. (London.)

*Author of Jubilee Leaves and other Poems,  
The Peacock-Messenger, Daivayogam and other translations,  
Our King-Emperor, Sreemoolarajavijayam & other Malayalam Works,  
Problem of Charity, Royal House of Travancore  
and other monographs.*

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1923.

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The "Anantha Rama Varma Press".  
TRIVANDRUM:

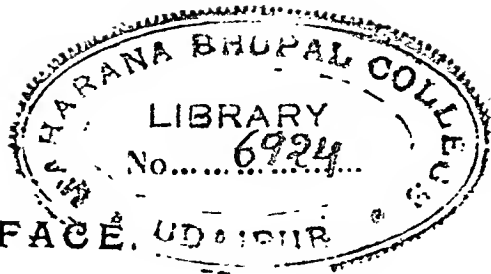
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**H. H. COL. SIR RAJA VARMA,  
MAHARAJAH OF TRAVANCORE.**



The world moves forward and we must move on with it  
or else, it will leave us behind. Neither princes nor people  
can afford to ignore this **PROGRESSIVE** tendency —

*Excerpt from His Highness' Speech in 1888.*



## PREFACE. UD: 1018

Between the Oriental ideal of the State as an organization of righteousness for the perfection of humanity and the Occidental ideal of the State as a contrivance of human wisdom to provide for human wants and wishes, stand the Indian States as survivals of the one and specimens of the other, no less than as diverse combinations of both. The Indian States are the rendezvous of the genius of the East and the spirit of the West. On the one hand, they have, among themselves, a common platform as regards their past traditions and present-day problems; on the other, they are integrally connected with the British Empire. This connection rests not merely on their political relations but also on the wide range of matters in which the British Provinces and the States are, in common, vitally interested and for which the chamber of Princes has been created under the recent Indian Reforms Act. Hence their polity is a part of the polity of British India. This is rendered further manifest by the principle, enunciated by His Excellency Lord Willingdon, of mutual crossing of the frontier to recognise and follow the best methods employed in attending to progress as a whole. That this is a marked feature of the present-day political life of the States is again demonstrated by the recent proceedings of the Madras Government, providing for mutual franchise to both the British subjects and the subjects of the States in the matter of election to the Legislative Council. It is in this larger light, I have directed my thoughts to the design of "**The Indian States Series**", indicative of the new outlook, the new spirit, the new turn of thought.

I have taken up Travancore first, because, situated as it is at the very land's end of India, it is *geographically* the first to lead off the series; also because, it is *historically* the oldest and the most uninterrupted lineal descendant of the ancient Indian Raj; and *politically* one of the foremost among the progressive Indian States of today. Above all, it has the first and foremost claim upon me, as the dear land of my birth.

In Travancore too, as in other States, momentous changes have occurred—some of them of a constitutional character which, apart from the new popular achievements, have recast the administrative model in a new mould. The constitution of the Sree Moolam Popular Assembly; the expansion of the Legislative Council; the creation of the Municipal Councils, of the Economic Development Board, of the Village Panchayat Courts, of Bench Magistracy, of Irrigation Boards, of the Standing Financial Committee and other popular bodies; the separation of the Devaswam Department from its one-hundred-year-old association with the Land Revenue Administration; the re-adjustment of territorial jurisdiction; the attempt at the splitting up of Executive and Judicial functions; the re-organisation and re-grouping of Development Departments; the revision and retrenchment of official staffs and their salaries; and above all, the impending transfer of the political control of the State from the Madras Government to the Government of India: and the appointment of Mr. C. W. E. Cotton of the Imperial service as Resident, marking perhaps the incipient stage thereof, have put everything in a new setting, synchronising with the commencement of a new epoch.

Accordingly, I turned to my "Brief Sketch of Travancore" published twenty years ago on the basis of materials to which His Highness' Government had then kindly allowed me access; and I have worked up the sketch into the new method of construction designed in these series. After an extensive investigation of nearly a quarter of a century, I

have come in possession of considerable first-hand information which I have applied to the revision and enlargement of my book in its new perspective.

The facts fall under four well-marked groups. Section I describes what Nature has done and fixes the position of the country in relation to its physical frame-work and features as forming part and parcel of physical India. Section II is a study of the social organization of the people in cor-relation to ethnical conditions of India, and is concerned with what man has done. Section III deals with what the State has done and surveys the political history of the country from early times as an integral part of British India. Section IV shows what the State is doing and reviews the growth and character of the administrative system and the popular movements with reference to the present-day progress as determined by the aggregate achievements.

Those who are familiar with my previous writings on Travancore may possibly accuse me of repeating myself here and there; but it must be remembered that all I have written in books, newspapers or magazines were conceived and intended all along to a complete and continuous work like the present one. Those who are familiar with official records may likewise detect in some portions of Section IV (Government at Work) somewhat the forms in which the matter figures in the original official records. The demand for 'hard facts', particularly peculiar to the validity of this section, has made it incumbent on me to rigorously refrain from any attempt to tear up the facts from their place and beat them into any new shape, build or beauty of my own. I have only related the facts and not attempted to account for or formulate them, as I have done and felt free to do, with respect to other Sections. I have taken every care to ensure accuracy; and it is idle to suppose that, with all caution one can escape falling into any error, the correction of which however, will be thankfully received and utilised as occasion permits.

I have attempted to attain an impartial outlook. I have no axe to grind. Nobody has asked me to undertake this work. It is a labour of love. No such labour does need any apology and no apology will suffice for any other labour. My most grateful thanks are due first and foremost to my most gracious Sovereign, for characteristic patronage. My thanks are also due to Dewan Bahadur T. Raghaviah, the Dewan, for his sympathetic appreciation; to my numerous friends (official and non official) for the information kindly furnished by them; and to the A R V. Press for the neat and prompt execution of the work.

S. RAMANATH AIYAR.

TRIVANDRUM, }  
25th August, 1923. }



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# Progressive Travancore.

## Section 1.

### THE COUNTRY (Descriptive)

#### WHAT NATURE HAS DONE.

In this section we are concerned with what nature has done and is doing towards the structure of the State—its physical frame, form and function, a knowledge of which is an essential prelude to the study of the structure of its society and its political history.

#### (1) Part and Parcel of Malayalam Nad.

Completely cut off from the rest of India by the lofty range of the Western Ghats on the east and by the dark blue waters of the Arabian sea on the west, there lies between them a long strip of land from the Head of the Gulf of Cambay in the north, right down to Cape Comorin in the south. From this point which is at once the southernmost extremity of India and the magnificent, meeting-point of the three southern seas, to the British port of Cochin which, on completion of the new harbour-scheme, promises to be the *entrepot* of trade between East and West, lies cradled like a child, the territory of Travancore; thence to Palliport, the coast-strip stretching northwards is the country of the Ruler of Cochin, upon whom the title of Maharaja has been recently conferred by the Supreme Government; and from Palliport to Mount Dally extends the present British Province of Malabar the re-construction of which after the terrible Mopla out-break is now severely taxing the energies of the Madras Government. These three groups form the southern, as Konkan does the northern half of the entire coast. They constitute the compact kingdom of Kerala or the Malayalam Nad. Though politically split up into Malabar

(a name now restricted to the British province only) and the two sister States of Travancore and Cochin, the whole extent of these territories, to which the name of Malabar was rightly appropriated in ancient times, is a homogeneous region perfectly identical in physical frame-work, in family life and social system, in language and literature, in historic evolution—as a matter of fact, in everything inclusive of the accident of divided dominions which had become a common factor both before and after the period of the Chera Sovereignty. This natural division answers to the ancient distribution of Dekhan into the national divisions of Dravida (Tamil), Kerala (Malayalam), Karnata, Telugu, Maharashtra and Uriya, as indicated by the corresponding languages in the respective localities—a linguistic arrangement to which present-day progress looks forward to go back. Despite the political divisions, (then as now) the regional group is to be taken as a whole in order to comprehend the common conditions inherent in the origin of the whole country and its colonisation by successive waves of people in the history of one of the oldest of the Indian States.

## (2) Gift of the Sea-God.

"Rising from out the azure main," this wonderful land which still woos the slinky bottom of the deep, is verily the gift of the sea-god whom Parasurama is said to have propitiated by his penance. There is nothing improbable in this tradition that has gathered round the name of Parasurama. It signifies little short of the natural phenomenon which accounts for this "offspring of the ocean." Peninsular India or Southern India, called also Deccan, is geologically made up of the vast triangular tableland resting on the Eastern and the Western Ghats. Geologists tell us that this is the oldest place on the earth's surface and its rivers and valleys were levelled up into a high tableland by the ashes and lavas poured by a stupendous convulsion; that the eastern and the western coast strips had been formed by the wearing down of their edges. In the old records of the Geological Survey of India, Dr. King refers to an old marine

terrace on the western side of India. According to Ptolemy, the sea coast ran along the eastern shore of the big Vembanad lake. It has been found that the bulk of the Shertalai Taluq was of comparatively later formation. Mr. Crawford who had opportunity in watching the phenomenon in relation to the mud bay or bank which exists at Calicut in Malabar, at Narakal in Cochin and at Alleppey in Travancore, has on record that the subterranean passages or streams communicating with some of the rivers and backwaters become more active at the commencement of the monsoon and carry off the accumulating water and, with it, vast quantities of soft mud. Mr. Crawford's successor at Alleppey, Mr. Rhodes also states that he has seen mud volcanoes burst at the sea during the rainy season. The action of the littoral currents in the sea-ward dissipation of the mud bank has continued in later times down to the present day, as evident from the report of Mr. Leverett, the Port Officer, that even during last year a mud bank formed off Kakazham first, and off Poracaud subsequently. The discovery, by geologists, of prodigious outbursts of plutonic and trapian rocks in the formation of the Western Ghats too, lends countenance to the tradition of Parasurama. The miraculous creation of the country by the hurling of his axe into the sea signifies little beyond a typical puranic record of this as many another natural phenomenon. The Andhra province is associated with the advent of sage Kanva; the Tamil Nad perpetuates the name of sage Agasthya; and the Malayalam country sanctifies similarly Parasurama as its originator and organiser.

### (3) Eponymous Nomenclature.

In these circumstances, well may the tradition of Parasurama live in the early and eponymous designation of the land as *Parasurama Kshetram* or land of Parasurama of the race of Bhrigu, the primeval patriarch of the Aryans whose peculiar mentality the late Prof: Max Muller describes thus: "When we say it thunders, they said Indra thunders; when we say it rains, they said Parjanya pours out his buckets; when we say it dawns, they said the beautiful Ushas appears like a

dancer displaying his splendour; when we say it grows dark, they said Surya unharnesses his steed. The whole of nature was alive to them; the presence of gods was felt everywhere; and in the sentiment of the presence of gods there was a germ of religious morality sufficiently strong to restrain people from committing as it were, before the eyes of their gods, what they were ashamed to commit before the eyes of men." *Sree Vardhanapuri* is another eponym in keeping with this spirit. Travancore is the anglicised form of *Thiruvithancode* which is a corruption of *Sree Vazhunkode*, which in turn is an indigenous adoption of the Sanskrit *Sree Vardhanapuri*, the appellation of modern Padmanabhapuram which was the ancient capital of the State when it was founded by Parasurama. It was only after Maharaja Marthanda Varma re-conquered the country to its present extent, that the court and capital city came to be shifted to Trivandrum where the shrine sacred to Sree Padmanabha was re-built. This event modified the name of *Sree Vardhanapuri* into *Tripapur*—the city at the sacred feet. There is a singular appropriateness in the conception of lotus-bearing Sree Padmanabha, as a god afloat on a fig leaf in the illimitable ocean of space with his lotus-born consort of Lakshmi of the Milky sea and in the consecration of this god as the patron-deity of the sex-reclaimed land of Parasurama. Rooted in reverence for God as the foundation of the universal law, the same Hindu Sovereign of Travancore raised divine guidance into the highest faith by dedicating the kingdom to his patron-deity and constituting himself as his earthly deputy or vice-gerent—a title retained by his successors to this day. It should be remembered that this Royal title is no token of any "right divine of kings to govern wrong." It is in a spirit of doing God's bidding. It is God speaking to the king, God directing and guiding him. It is God's voice leading him on. As a matter of fact the sovereign does declare today in all his *uicts* (Royal writs) that he derives the determination of mind from the impulse of the deity. This is god-guided *Dharma*. Thus under its perpetual patent, the ruler is *Dharma Raja* and his country *Dharma Bhumi*, as

evidenced by the Royal motto "*Dharmasmath kula Daivatham*," erroneously translated—"charity is our household divinity." Dharma of course includes charity, but it is much more. It is just and righteous law which is God who sanctions it and supports it. *Rama Rajyam* is a later eponym—not after the classic Rama of yore but associated with the modern Rajas of that name who strive to emulate the ancient Royal Exemplar. These comments made at the outset will bear repetition later.

#### (4) General Build and Beauty.

Few lands have been more richly endowed by nature. Bounded and buttressed on one side by a series of mountains which break off into elevations of every variety, gradually sinking down westwards to the level of the low country; covered with an abundance of superb forest; washed by very many large and fine rivers which, often expanding into lakes or lagoons, enrich the coconut gardens or the cultivated fields on their banks; and bordered on the other side by an extensive seaboard which affords many a safe roadstead for ships, the country presents diverse physical conditions which compel Nature to be so boundlessly bountiful. It is the happy combination of these conditions that induced Lord Curzon, during his visit to this region, to declare that "in the whole of India, there is no State with greater fertility of resources, with more picturesque surroundings, with ampler opportunities for work, with richer prospects of development." Sir M. E. Grant Duff describes it as one of the fairest and most interesting realms that Asia has to show; and Lord Connemara calls it a fairy land. It is the wonderful widening out of the mountain mass that has given the country an easy lie of its strata in picturesque terrace. According to the geological accounts, this terrace-arrangement is marked out by four zones:—crystalline rock: residual laterite: tertiary formation: sand and silt. On this basic skeleton rise the several steps of the terrace.

A bird's-eye-view of the mountains and river-valleys, tablelands and coasts which make up the build of the physical mansion will convey an idea of nature's contrivance in endowing

it with such exuberant natural beauty and arcadian charm so fondly admired and faithfully depicted by pilgrims of nature, pen-men and pro-consuls.

### (5) Monarch of Mountains.

The *Markandeya Purana* makes a monarch of *Sahyadri*, the name assigned in it to the Western Ghats which gird and guard the country entirely on the Eastern side. The puranic description is perfectly true. Nature crowned Sahya long ago. From his throne of rock he commands clouds; creates rivers; controls the state of atmosphere; clothes the country; and continues still his natural sway. The mountains form a concourse of ridges rather than a chain. Steep in the mountain region, these cluster off southwards and westwards into a succession of hills, round in the northern and irregular in the southern regions. At several points they rise to an elevation of 8000 ft. above the sea. The transition from hill to dale in most cases, is abrupt. The valleys widen as the elevation diminishes. The average altitude of these summits is 4000 ft. The highest hills are naked on the top, furrowed by ravines on the sides and braced round with dense forests at the base. Near the low hills, the plains are most level and best suited for rice cultivation. Near the sea, they rise into sandy low-downs admirably adapted for coconut cultivation.

The mountain chain bears different names in different parts. It is not proposed to make an exhaustive list of them. Only the important ones that have a historical bearing are mentioned. The northern portion is known as the High Range or the *Anamalai*. Its Sanskrit name is *Gajasingham* or the Elephant Hill. It has a remarkable rock, two miles long and one-fourth of a mile in breadth. This is supposed to represent the elephant sent by a king of the Chola country to devastate and destroy the beautiful city of Madura. There is a ruined temple hewn out of a side of the rock said to have been destroyed by Tippu Sultan. The chief summit of the Anamalai Range is called *Anamudi*. It has a climate similar to Ootacamund.



The plateau is often visited by hunters who obtain honey by swinging themselves over the precipice with long chains of ropes or rattans and sell the article to the people of the plains. Further south, are the Cardamom Hills and the Peermed plateau. The latter, called after the Mahomedan Saint, Peer Mohamed, who is said to have resided there, is the seat and centre of planting industries. The range descends to the Shencotta pass, but rises further south and stretches for over 60 miles. Its termination is *Agastiakudom* or the abode of Agastia, one of the seven sages whom popular tradition considers to reside there down to this day. Its height is 9150 feet and on this was built, in 1854, an Observatory under the direction of Mr. Broun who recorded meteorological observations for a long time. The southernmost peak of the Travancore Ghats is Mahendragiri mentioned by Pliny. This is the hill from the crest of which Hanuman, the monkey-chief and confederate of the classic Rama, is said to have leaped to the beautiful Lanka called also "the golden isle" as well as "the pearl of the Sea." These peaks which make up the chain of the Ghats rise in successive tiers till the crown of their highest causes utter confusion amidst the conspiring company of the clouds.

### (6) Martial March of Waters.

The mountain-monarch takes command of the troops of water-laden clouds riding on the winds of the Arabian Sea and compels them to consign their precious treasure to the country. Hence, like few provinces of similar extent, it is washed by very many large and fine rivers. They rise in the mountain slopes, take more or less a westerly or southerly direction and discharge themselves into the sea, either directly or through the lagoons. The bed of the rivers is frequently rocky at the elevated parts but in most instances, sandy, as they approach the plains. The banks are, near the Ghats, precipitous, but get lower and lower as they quit the elevated parts. They are successively over-hung by verdant forests, groves of luxuriant vegetation or cultivated fields. The course of the rivers is winding, especially towards the

coast and the depth is, on the average, from 12 ft. to 15 ft., while the tides, whose vicissitudes are felt but slightly, rise about 3 ft. and are subject to diversity. With the beginning of the monsoon, the rivers rapidly swell and spread without control, rolling a full and copious tide, but they diminish with equal rapidity when the violence of the monsoon draws to a close. By far, the largest is the Periyar, as its name signifies. It is unsurpassed in size and beauty by any of the streams of the west coast. Its enormous volume of water is now diverted into Madura by the Periyar water-works for which the Durbar has leased out to the British Government over 8,000 acres of land above the river-line for a consideration of 40,000 Rupees. It is worthy of note that Mr. Nelson records, in his "Madura Manual," that this project was under contemplation "even during the days of the Madura Naicks." The Muvattupuzhal and the Meenachil are two other large rivers which pour their waters into the Vembanad lake—the reservoir of the copious tribute of many large rivers. The Pamha or Ranni river is one of the finest streams of Travancore. About 20 miles above the mouth, it unites with the Achienkoil or Kulakada river which issues from the foot of the pass of the same name. Five miles down, this rapid stream is joined by the Manimala river which proceeds from the Peermado plateau. Its waters are much used for cultivation. Further south is the Kallada, the third largest river in the country, swelled by the tribute of several large streams that flow from the higher ghats in a succession of cataracts, the largest and the most remarkable of which is *Miamutti* flowing into the Ashtamudi Lake by several wide mouths. Numerous other mountain streams which leap from rock to rock, thunder down the valley and discharge themselves into the sea direct. They are of no irrigation value. Two rivers count much with the cultivator—one being the Thamravarni with its tributary, Kothai, the waters of both of which are diverted by dams and projects for irrigation purposes; the other is, the Paralayar, the most southern of the rivers whose waters are wholly absorbed in irrigating a vast extent of land. To

these, Nanjanad, the granary of South Travancore, owes much of its fertility.

### (7) A Line of Lakes

There is at the fore-fronts of river-mouths a battle of the floods of the rivers with the waves of the sea. In this fight the river-floods are caught at the lakes and kept there at bay by the superior force and function of the sea. The surrender is signalised by a succession of lagoons or backwaters extending along the coast and forming an important means of water-communication. As observed by Lieutenants Ward and Connor in their Memoirs of Travancore, "they enrich the neighbourhood, unite the distant parts and increase the value of natural productions by the facility they give to carriage. The whole traffic of the western part of the country is done by them." The large lakes are fed by the copious waters of innumerable rivers. The smaller ones are merely the expansion of the beds of rivers as they approach their mouths. The most important of the lakes have outlets into the sea. These outlets are often closed by bars of sand. When the monsoon sets in, the water jumps impatiently from the beds of the lakes and either breaks through or flows over the bars, according to the fury with which the periodical rains burst. It is then terrible to think of being caught in the grip of the enraged elements on the troubled waters, but it is a source of infinite consolation and comfort to contemplate the weird view of the lakes, when they resume calmness and the setting sun shines on the unlimited expanse of water through the beautiful groves of the cocoanut palms which skirt their margins, or the smiling moon spreads her silver lustre amidst the solemn stillness of the night. The splendour is enhanced when beautiful boats, provided with numerous paddles, press their progress with singular rapidity. The lakes then present the appearance of a perpetual garden of lasting delight.

The Vembauad is the largest lake in Travancore, being 32 miles long. Its extreme breadth is 9 miles. This lake passes along 7 taluks of the country. In some parts, the soundings

show considerable depth; in other parts, the lake is very shallow. It has a small island in the centre, known as the *Patramanal* or 'the mysterious mound of midnight.' It is filled with cocoanut plantations or luxuriant vegetation, and presents an infinitely charming appearance. It was, according to tradition, called into existence by the piety of a Namhuri Brahmin who, while travelling in a country canoe, jumped out there into the lake to perform his religious rites at the appointed hour' The Kayankulam lake is 19 miles long and has wide expansions at both the extremities, into which the Cochin route from the north and the Quilon route from the south open. It has an outlet bar of the same name which admits small coasters from the Arabian sea. This made Kayankulam a place of considerable commercial importance during the days of Dutch influence before the subversion of the independent state of Quilon. The Ashtamudi or the lake of 8 creeks lies near historic Quilon and is swelled by the tributs of the Kallada river. It has also an outlet into the sea through the Nindakara bar. One of its arms lies near the Quilon Residency, and it goes by the name of Loch Lomond on account of its romantic scenery. The Parur lake is a dangerous portion of the water-communication owing to the strong action of the under-current work of its bar, when it is broken through during the violence of the periodical rains. The Anjengo lake takes its name from the town of which it lies along-side.

### (8) Links of the Line

The lakes run parallel to the coast and are at right angles to the lines of rivers. Their natural position has been taken advantage of to provide through water-communication from one end of the country to the other. The canals are the intermediate links of the line of lakes. The water-ways of Travancore, says Mr. Nicholson, are specially from the centre to the North, highly ramified and already excellent for all classes of country-traffic. They might on main lines be developed into trade-routes. The cost of travel and transport on Travancore waters, he adds, is perhaps  $\frac{1}{4}$

of ordinary cart-charges, while transit is quite as speedy and far less risky for goods and far more comfortable for passengers. He thinks that, for most of the water-ways, little or no maintenance is required for ordinary traffic, especially in the Northern Division where, as in Shertalai, the country has vast areas of backwater or where, as in Changanacherry over large reclaimed areas, there can be no roads but only rivers and canals, so that travellers, even children, paddle rather than walk. One stretch of water extends along the entire length of the country from Trivandrum northwards as a result of the bounty of nature slightly added to by the work of man.

The project of "canal-links" was contemplated by Col Munro, the Resident-Dewan of the day. It was during the benevolent reign of Her Highness Parvathi Rani, that most of the links of this uninterrupted line of communication were executed. The canal between the Trivandrum landing place and Chanankarai, commenced in 1823, was brought to a completion in 1826. The length of the canal is  $11\frac{3}{4}$  miles exclusive of the lake it passes through. From Chanankarai to Kozhithottam there is a canal again. The Varkalai Barrier canal, cut open through two tunnels of about 1500 feet and 2500 feet each, was opened for traffic in 1877. There are a series of lakes from Nadayara to Paroor. The Paroor canal, connecting the Nadayara lake and the Parur lake, was completed in 1820. The Quilon canal which links the Parur lake with the Ashtamudi lake was also opened about the same time. There is then the Chavarai canal between the Ashtamudi lake and the Ponmana waters. This is followed by the "Ayiram Thengu" backwater; then comes the Kayankulam lake. With it, the Trikkunnappuzhai backwater joins the Thottapalli Cherai, whence the Pamba river flows into the Vembanad lake. There are several other branch-canals. The Alleppey canal communicating with the backwater is of commercial importance. It is a matter of interest to note that the great Anantha Victoria Marthanda Canal, projected and commenced in 1860 for connecting Tri-

vanjrum with Cape Comorin, abandoned then partly owing to the obstacles presented by the Covellam cliffs and the Midalam Barrier, and partly on account of the pressing tunnel-work at Varkalai which drained off the work-men, the officers and the capital allotted to this scheme, has still a great prospect before it now. The Department of Public Works maintains 152 miles of water-way and it has to be borne in mind that this is a trifle out of the actual water-ways.

### (9) Sea-board and Break-waters.

The influence of sea, like that of mountain, is equally paramount. The coast-line is the common rendezvous of the rolling ridges of elevation on the surface of the sea and the rolled ridges of elevation on the surface of the land. The country has, from the ancient times, been known to the external world. The extensive sea-board affording many a safe roadstead for ships to anchor off and the immense natural wealth of the country have induced foreign nations to colonise it for purposes of trade from pre-historic times. Like India, from whose trade the brilliant mediæval Republic of Italy drew no small share of her wealth, it is recorded by the late Sir W. W. Hunter that the pepper trade of Malabar and Travancore dates from far beyond the age of Sindbad the Sailor, and reaches back to Roman times and that philology proves that the precious cargoes of Solomon's merchant ships came from the ancient western coast. Mr. Wigram, a distinguished member of the Indian Civil Service, maintains, in his "Malabar Law and Custom" that, when commerce was almost in its infancy, a trade sprung up between the Mediterranean ports and the ports of the west coast. The foreign intercourse resulted in the attainment, by the country, of historical importance and, by the people, of a higher civilization.

The sea-board extends for nearly 180 miles in length and the coast-line is marked off by five sea-ports. The coast is, however, interrupted by the precipitous rocks of Cape

Comorin, the jutting promontories of Kadiapattanam and Vilingim, the rugged cliffs of Warkalai where beds are seen under sea between Tangacheri and Nindakara. The Warkalai bed re-appears at Pallikkal in Mavelikara and passes under 'recent sands.' The coral reefs below the alluvial Vazhapalli shows that the coast-line was further inland in early times. The town of Alleppey is the principal seaport of Travancore. It has the most remarkable haven of smooth calm water, called the 'mud bay' by the early navigators. It is a place of considerable foreign trade and the headquarters of the Customs Agent and Port Officer. Fra. Bartalomeo has put it on record that Alleppey was opened to foreign trade in A. D. 1762 and mentions the canal which runs parallel to the coast and backwater. It has a lighthouse 100 feet above the sea-level, visible seawards for 15 miles. The next important port is Quilon, a place of great commercial activity and of considerable historical importance. The Nindakara bar has been surveyed, and erection of a pillar at Quilon is under consideration. Close by, on the margin of the sea, lies the small port and British possession of Tangacherry which has a flagstaff. Anjengo is another small port midway between Quilon and Trivandrum. It will be interesting to English readers to learn that it was the birthplace of the great historian, Robert Orme, and the chief military depot on the west coast during the wars of the 18th century. It passed under the sway of the British in 1795 and still continues to be in their possession. The port of Trivandrum, the present capital of the State and the seat of the residency, is the next place that affords a safe harbour. The new port and customs building were completed last year. Further south is the small port of Colachel; lastly there is Cape Comorin, the southernmost extremity. It has a natural harbour which is a safe roadstead for ships during the monsoons.

#### **(10) Atmospheric Adjustments and Adaptations.**

Over the liquid undulations of the sea and the solid waves of the land rolls the airy ocean of atmosphere

distributing heat, moisture and wind. The atmospheric adjustments and adaptations determine the water-supply and ventilation of the country technically called Meteorology, a full treatment of which has to be looked for in technical treatises of specialists. These notes are however offered only to the general reader who wishes to get an idea of the country in all its aspects. The conditions of climate are as varied as the diverse gradations of the land-height from the view and level of the sea. Hence it has been observed that the meteorological effects of the whole of India, if not of the whole world, are in a small compass presented to us in Travancore; that on some of the peaks we have the pinching cold of the northern regions of Europe; that lower down, on an elevation of between 2000 and 3000 feet, one meets with the bracing temperature of England; that an Italian sun, with its clear and cloudless sky and a genial warmth, is experienced all over the country for a few weeks after the cessation of the heavy monsoons; and that from January to May which constitute the months of the hot season, there is an intense and oppressive heat which at times becomes so intolerable that some of the taluqs then present the aspect of a true equatorial region from which it is not far distant.

Among the chief of the different causes to which the peculiar characteristics of Travancore are ascribed, may be mentioned the following—(1) Its situation near the equator which makes it hotter than the countries interior. (2) Its vicinity to the Indian Ocean which prevents the air from becoming either too warm or too cold. (3) The influence of the mountain ranges which shut off the country from the rest of India.

By its configuration, the country comes within the fourth of the five zones of Indian climate—the monsoon-region of which it forms the first catchment-area. The up-draughts of the Arabian sea, big with moisture, dash against the mighty mountain-wall which they are unable to climb or cross. The effect is the burst of the S. W. Monsoon—a special boon of nature that makes Travancore a country of never-falling



rain. This monsoon begins about the middle of May and lasts till October. Its downpour is heavy and denoted by the torch and trumpet of lightning and thunder. The quantity of rain is less in the southern part of the country and increases along the sea-line to the north. The north-eastern parts are supplied with rain by the effects of the monsoon of that direction. It commences in the month of October. The amount of rainfall is calculated for a number of years. It was in 1836 an Observatory was established at Trivandrum. It is situated on a hill about 200 ft. above the level of the sea. The first meteorological observations were made by John Caldecott, the first astronomer. General Cullen, the British Resident had also caused observations to be taken, ascertaining the rainfall from 1852-56 at Cochin, Quilon, Alleppy, Cape Comorin and other places. In 1852 Mr. John Broun became the Government Astronomer. It was during his time the most extensive observations were recorded. The Branch Observatory established by him on the Agasthya Peak, however, fell to pieces during his absence and was finally abolished. The average amount of rainfall varies in different places. Judging by the quantity of rain gauged in the several stations it is observed that nearest the Cape it is the lowest and that the highest fall is in Peermed.

The country has a constant flow of breeze. From February to September it blows from the west or north-west: during other months it takes a more northerly direction. The saturation of air with moisture during the continuance of the rains is noteworthy. The direction of the sea-breeze is from north to west and ultimately to south-west, while that of the land-winds is from north-east and east. The sea-breeze sets in violently at times and lasts through the year. The land-wind blows after sun-set and continues till next day noon. It blows rather violently at the entrance of the mountain passes. Every traveller knows that through the Aramboly pass the high wind rushes forth vehemently and upsets many a cart and traffic and even men!

The temperature of the country is more or less uniform. Its proximity to the sea does not allow it to vary as it would in the interior regions. The highest temperature of the air takes place in April, when it rises as high as  $81^{\circ}$ . In December it falls considerably and the lowest heat recorded seems to be  $64^{\circ}$ . The mean temperature at Trivandrum is  $78^{\circ}$ .

The more or less uniform character of the temperature is considerably influenced by the wet and dry weather which marks out the seasons. The dry season commences in January with the commencement of the New-year. It lasts till the end of April. The period of March-April is the hottest part of the year. The hottest portions of the country are in the extreme south and in Shencottah, as also along the ghaut-line. The wet weather begins in about the early part of June and heavy rains prevail till the close of August.

The most striking characteristic of the climate is that heat and moisture come together. The co-existence of wetness and warmth is a special feature so favourable to conditions of plant-growth as manifest from green glades and grassy dells which completely cover the land.

## (11) Forests and Fauna.

The Flora of the State is exceedingly rich. Such remarkable wealth of vegetation is undoubtedly due to the climatic conditions prevailing here—the abundant rainfall, the regular seasons and the equable high temperature. It has been officially ascertained there is a larger percentage of the land of the State under forests than in any European Country or in the United States.

Sir John Rees hits off most happily the lovely scenery of the Travancore forests which are unique in their own way:—  
 “If the night spent on the way recall the Inferno, the days are those of Paradise when once the hills are reached, and the traveller rides through shady forest under a leafy canopy,

only admitting the sunshine by infrequent shafts; every support of the lofty roof a tall pillar tree with a green Corinthian capital festooned with vines and creeping plants, and floor covered with an undergrowth of tree-ferns, cycas and flowering shrubs or the graceful cardamom whose smooth glistening oblong leaves wave tremulously in light breezes, which hardly stir the firmer foliage of the trees. Above, black monkeys leap joyously from tree to tree; Malabar squirrels jump about, the yellow fur of their stomachs and the red fur of their backs gleaming in the sunshine which catches the taller trees; wood pigeons flit through the sylvan aisles; jungle fowls cackle; woodpeckers tap the tree trunks, and cicadæ shrilly whistle; and yet the general effect is one of silence. In the morning hours one might well call these forests the mysterious temple of the dawn."

The mountainous region enclosed within the forest limits measures 3544 square miles and is watered by 18 rivers of different sizes. Mr. Bourdillon divides this region into 4 classes according to their characters, namely—(1) "heavy moist forests of evergreen trees. (2) Land originally covered with moist forest, but now overspread with trees of various ages. (3) Deciduous forests with grass growing under the trees and, (4) Rock and land covered with short grass, useless for any purpose except pasture."

In these floral belts flourish the aristocracy of noble trees which supply the most valuable timber, the best Indian fruits and other valuable products. Teak, the monarch of the woods, is found in abundance. It thrives best on the western slope of the hills. About 8000 logs are exported every year to countries beyond the confines of the Indian Empire. The beautiful Anjelly grows in open forests. The Cedar is found on the banks of rivers. The Cinnamon of which there are several varieties, is exceedingly common on hill slopes. The Ebony which is much used for fancy articles, is largely collected at the Shencottah Forest Depot. The Dammer and Nuxvomica which rapidly attain to a great size and give a cool shade, are widely distributed. The Banyan runs wild

in the country, and is much planted for avenues along-side of the great southern road. The beautiful Laurel and the graceful Peepul, both held in great veneration by the Hindus, are found everywhere. Tradition ascribes the abode of Brahma, the Creator, to the root of the Peepul; of Vishnu, the Preserver, to the stem; and of Siva, the Destroyer, to the branches. The Blackwood and the Persian Lilac, used much for furniture, rapidly grow up in the Ashambu Hills and the forest glades of Camp Gorge. Cotton occurs everywhere from the sea-level up to three thousand feet. Jack, which yields the most valuable timber, yields no less valuable fruits which are prized much by princes and peasants alike. The Mango, the prince of Indian fruits, is very plentiful, though it is supposed to have been introduced from Ceylon. There are several varieties of which the best is engrafted. The Gallnut and the Gooseberry are very common. Barring the timber trees and fruit trees, the Palm trees are the chief among the cultivated crops that contribute to the agricultural wealth of the country. In the words of an eminent writer, "Travancore yields palms sufficient to give man flour and sugar; milk and honey-like fluids; demulcant drinks and fiery spirits; medicines and soap; fibre for cordage, sails and clothing; leaves for thatching and plaiting, as well as wood for a variety of purposes." Next to the fruit trees and palm trees, rice forms the chief source of agricultural wealth. The rice produced is not a fine variety except in Nanjinaud, justly known as the granary of the south; it is not sufficient to meet local consumption. Next comes pepper, the vine of which grows round the jack and the mango and some of the palm trees which form the mainstay of the poor. It is well-known that the pepper trade of Travancore dates from far beyond the age of Sindbad the Sailor, and reaches back to Roman times. Tapioca has been introduced and its cultivation is so extended that it has also become a staple article of food. In the hills, the cardamom which was till quite recently a State monopoly, grows spontaneously in the deep shade of the forests. Coffee has been introduced within the last two or three decades but it does not prosper. Tea

takes kindly to the soil. The European Planters make a fortune out of it. Among other productions that constitute the agricultural flora, may be named the plantain, the pineapple, lime, pomegranate, sugar-cane, guava, nutmeg, cloves and other garden crops. It is not therefore too much to say that Travancore is the garden of India.

In the Forest Museum and Herbarium several specimens have been collected. About 700 specimens have been identified by the Curator. These were sent to Mr. Gamble who is engaged in preparing "The Flora of the Madras Presidency." In his opinion, twelve distinctive species have been found for the first time in Travancore.

## (12) Faunal Variety.

The mountains and forests of Travancore are the home of all kinds of creatures from the huge elephant to the tiny cicada. They give shelter to all kinds of beasts, birds and insects. These afford some of the best sport to be got anywhere in India especially in the shape of "large game". The sportsman and the naturalist will find an endless variety in the fauna. In the wooded valleys and tablelands the wild buffalao, the wild swine, the elk, the leopard, the black leopard and the bear abound. Monkeys exist in large numbers and variety. The antelope, the civet cat, the jackal, the hare, the ichneumon or mongoose, the otter and a seal of diminutive size are known in Travancore. Of birds, the hawks, the raven, the vulture, the pea-fowl, the jungle fowl, the pied bird of paradise, parrot and paraquets innumerable and destructive to crops and lastly, aquatic of diverse species and in great numbers. Of reptiles, snakes various in kind, scorpions, centipedes, alligators of great size swarm in the rivers and lakes, and are voracious.

The characteristic animal of the country is the elephant so abundant all along the Western Ghats, especially on the Anamalai Hills, named so from that circumstance. It is one of the oldest known of animals. As a badge, the elephant

represents the Chera and the Chola dynasties. It is the emblem of the Royal House of Travancore.

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## Section II.

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### PEOPLE (Ethnological)

#### WHAT MAN HAS DONE

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#### Social Structure.

This Section deals with the strata of Society. No less diversified are the strata of society than the physical features of the country. The same terrace-like lie of the land is discernible in the disposition of the several social layers. Unmolested by invaders and held aloof from neighbours by the natural barrier, the original structure has not been altered. The 'family of giant fallen cliffs has its social counter-parts of crushed and crumbling privileged classes. There are isolated hills of exclusive castes; the ancient table-land of aristocracy with its forest reserves of vested interest; the smiling vales of toiling peasantry; the low marshes of the submerged classes. The rushing rivers of social advancement run from every social crag and cleft and struggle with the sea of traditions of a forgotten age preserved in the stagnant lochs and lagoons of those who live exactly as their forefathers did. The slow-moving streams of the conservative class contrast with the cataracts that come dashing down the defiles of democracy. The mon-

soon-burst of progressive ideas and ideals fills all the classes with the flood of a new civic consciousness accompanied often by a prelude of communal thunder and lightning. The atmospheric adjustments however, make for the social climate being equable and temperate—a condition so indispensable to prosperity and progress. The people consist of Hindus, Mahomedans and Christians, the last of whom bear the largest proportion to the population in all India.

## SECTIONS OF HINDUS.

The leading layers of the Hindu section of the people are:—

- I. The early races or the Aborigines and Adi Dravidas or the Chērumar, who were either conquered by the kings of old, and then driven into jungles, or forced into slavery.
- II. The Tiyyas bearing different names in different parts who were tree-tappers or land-tillers and who were free-men from the beginning.
- III. The Nairs of various dignities and denominations and their Dravidian collateral links who typify the military nobility.
- IV. The Nambudiris or the Malayala Brahmins and the numerous intermediate castes between them and the Nairs, peculiarly characteristic of this coast, who represent the power of the Priest.
- V. The East Coast Brahmins (including Tamil, Telugu, Mahrathi &c.) whose function in a society of the orders of priest, soldier, farmer, and servant is seen reflected in the above four groups, probably as the result of the Aryan absorption of the Dravidian into the ancient commonwealth.

### I. Aborigines.

#### THEIR TRIBES AND TRADITIONS.

Of the original inhabitants we know very little. They have to be looked for among the hill tribes who are supposed

to be the Aborigines. They indicate an early unevolved condition of society. They are aboriginal in the sense that their settlement was antecedent to the original population. They are primitive in their ways of life. They have no abode. They wander about the woods. They do not build houses but take shelter under trees or in caves. They wear leaves. They own no animals. They speak an unintelligible language akin to Tamil in the South and Malayalam in the North. They are savages and possess no arts of civilised life. They are split up into 12 or 14 tribes who dwell in isolated tracts and represent separate sections of the same subdued pre-existing race.

The *Kanies* inhabit patches of forest about the basin of the rivers Peralai, Kothai, Ney, Vamanapuram and Kelladai. These immigrated from the low country behind the Agasthya-kudam Hills. Tradition has it that two hill lords—Srirangan and Virappen—were their forerunners on the Pandi side of the Ghats. South Travancore is their habitat—particularly the mountain slopes in Nedumangad and Neyyattinkaral. A forest block is assigned to them free of tax. Here they live together in clans and hold their Village Council in which the *Moothakani*, the head of the village, wields considerable voice and influence. The *Kanies* are skilled in bowmanship. They are employed by Government to collect honey, cardamoms, wax, dammer &c., for which function they get some remuneration known as *Kudivaram*. In deploring the fate of these hill-kings at the hands of the planters who drive them from hill to hill, Mr. Hennis freely admits that they are more faithful to their engagements than their more civilised brethren in the plains. The *Kanies* are not considered so low in the social scale as the *Cherumar*. Their line of descent is from father to son.

The *Mudurans* who immigrated from the Madura side are so called because they are said to have borne on their *Muduku* or back the image of goddess Meenakshi of Madura and carried it to the temple of the Punjar Chief whose patron-goddess she is. The *Muduran* headman is called



*Vakka* whose influence is great as that of the *Moothakani* among the Kanies. The *Muduvans* are found in Mannankantam, Anakkulam, Thrikkarmalai and other hilly tracts of the Thodupuzha Taluq.

The *Mannans* are most numerous on the hills east of the Periyar up to the foot of the High Range. They too, were dependants of Punjar Chief who chose from among them 3 of his agents at 3 different centres in his dominions—one at Thollairamalai entitled *Varayilkizh Mannan* with a silver sword as the badge of his office; the second at Mannankantam, entitled *Gopura Mannan* with a bracelet as the badge of his office; and the third at Utumpanchola entitled *Thalamala Mannan* with a silver cane as the badge of his office.

The *Ooralis* were also dependants of the Madura kings. Their function was to hold umbrellas in times of State procession and they formed the retinue of the Madura King during his visit to the Thodupuzha Taluq which, in ancient times, formed part of the Madura kingdom. The tradition is that one of the ancestors of the *Ooralis* was left there to rule the locality.

This tradition of the *Oorali* Kingship in North Travancore has its counterpart of *Korava* Kingship in South Travancore. It is well-known that Nanjanad has a line of Korava kings called *Nanji Koravan*. These traditions lend colour to the view that the hill tribes indicate a pre-existing race subjugated subsequently. This accords again with the dominions which even the Pulayas (known as Cherumar) had over several parts of the country. The *Aikkara Yeman* in Kunnathunad, who claims ancestry from Cherumar Chiefs, is still looked upon by the Pulayas as their communal head, while in Trivandrum there lies on the banks of the Veli lake a hill called *Pulayanarkotta* where it is believed such Chiefs once ruled. Similarly, Uzhamalakkal in Nedumangad and Chatayamangalam in Kottarakkra are said to have been under Cherumar sway.

The Muthuvans, Mannans and Ooralis speak a language more akin to Tamil than Malayalam, and freely intermarry

with the Tamils. They have, therefore, probably immigrated from the Tamil country. Mr. Munro supports this view and states that Mannans descended from men of various trades in the Tamil country, do on certain days Pujā to the tools of their ancestors. They claim superiority over the other tribes.

The Hill Pandarams live in caves found along the mountain-course of the Pamba. The *Kochuvallans* occupy the forest regions lying along-side of the Ranni. The *Ulladans* tenant the elevations round which winds the Palayi river. Along the foot of the hills from the Periyar to Thodupuzhai, the *Arayans* (known also as *Vailanmars* and often called Mala-Arayans or Lords of the Hills) are scattered in numerous camps. They wander over the Thodupuzha Hills, and were at an early date the property of the Alwancherry Thanubrakal—the recognized chief of the later Numboory immigrants. The Cardamom Hills near Vendamctu form the habitat of the *Palliyars*.

### HOW HINDUIZED.

The hill-men believe that their dead ancestors live by preference in hills, peaks, trees, and rocks, and they invoke their *manes* when oppressed by illness or hunger. But the higher sort of hill-men has no temple nor priests. The higher deities are however, *Sasta* and *Baghavathi*. They worship the former as Kulathupuzhai Thevar and the latter as Kadaikal Thampuratti and consider the minor deities only as subordinate to these. They were installed by Parasurama, and a series of temples dedicated to the former are dotted over the summit of the Ghats such as Achankoll, Kulathupuzhai, Aryankavu and Sabarimalai and, a series of temples dedicated to the latter lie scattered along the coast-line such as Cape Comorin, Mandakad, Puzhiyoor, Sankumukham, Sarkara, Paravoor, Quilon, Alleppey and Shertallai. The location of these temples and the deities to whom they are sacred accord with the tradition which ascribes this arrangement to Parasurama. In her "Land of the Conch Shell" Miss A. M. Blandford says, "that the hill-tribes were the

original inhabitants of Travancore and that when the colony brought down from north by Parasurama disputed the land with them, they repaired to the hills and escaped the slavery which fell to the lot of the Pulayas".

## Cherumars—a Distinct Race.

### THEIR DIVERSE CLANS.

Besides the hill-tribes who wander over mountain fastnesses, those brought under predial bondage by successive waves of immigration go under the generic title of Cherumar. These are represented by the Paraya, the Pulaya and the Palla. The Parayas however, rightly recall now their having been *Adipurva Kudikal* or the original inhabitants of *Jambu Dweep* or South India and re-claim their ancient designation of Jambuvar or Sambuvar—a name so readily recognised by the Government and retained by the class at present. This is in accord with the view of Sir Henry Stuart who considers the connection of Parayas with the South Indian soil more ancient than that of any other class. Similarly, the Parayas, who originally came to be called Pulayas after their advent to the Chera Land, have resumed their ancient appellation of Cherumar, with the due recognition of the Government. The Pallars who proceeded from the Pandya Province are trying to change their present name too into Pandyas. It may be remarked here that the change of names is the prelude of the new consciousness awakened by the spirit of the day. The Cherumars constitute a distinct ancient race. Dr. Caldwell thinks that all the indigenous tribes who were found by the Aryans in South India belong substantially to one and the same race. They are distinctly Dravidian and hence called *Adi Dravidas* on the East Coast.

### VALLUVA PRIESTS.

Though they have their own sub-divisions and their own tradition and their own jealousy, they own the Valluvan as their common priest. The Valluvan of each *Kara* had power over them in ancient days. He had the five-fold privileges of using a long umbrella, five-coloured umbrellas, bracelets, gold

earrings and a betel-leaf box. His staff included *Kuruppan* of accountant; *Komarathan* or religious dancer; *Kaikaran* or people's delegate; and *Vadikaran* or policeman. Similarly, the *Aikkara Yaman*, already referred to as their communal head, had under him two subordinates known as *Tatteri Achan* and *Mannathu Koil Vallon* under whom again were *Valluvars* as the headmen of each *Kāra*. Mr. Featherman says that, though *Pulayas* belong to the *Cherumar* class, they form a regularly organised tribe, and public affairs are controlled by an Assembly of elders.

### SUBJECTION TO SLAVERY.

However fairly complete their tribal organisation was, they came to be reduced to slavery. Most of them were domestic servants of the Nairs in ancient days as they are of the Europeans in Southern India now, with this difference that they were attached not to the kitchen but to the soil, the tilling of which formed the staple craft of their early masters. In the far-off times they were indeed subject to avowed slavery. As such they were attached to lands like chattels and were bought and sold. Their masters were authorised themselves to punish them for refractory conduct—a power which, it may be imagined, was frequently abused in no small degree. Even those that were not avowed slaves used to be treated almost as such. They were not at liberty to keep cows. They could not use oil mills. They were interdicted from carrying on trade. They were debarred the use of any but coarse cloths. It is improper in them, whether males or females, to wear any but the most ordinary personal ornaments. It was not open to them to decorate sheds erected on marriage occasions. They were restricted to particular music. They were denied permission to wear shoes or use umbrellas. It was considered improper to allow them to use metallic utensils. They could not build substantial or tiled houses. Nor could they acquire landed property with impunity. In fact, these unfortunate low-castes used to be treated as quite an inferior order of creation.

## THEIR ENFRANCHISEMENT.

By Royal Proclamation of 1812 the purchase and sale of all slaves other than those attached to the soil were strictly prohibited and all transgressors were declared liable to confiscation of property, if not banishment from the country. This did much ; but it was only in 1855 the total abolition of slavery and, with it, the complete enfranchisement of these thralls took place. Sir Madhava Rao says that till June 1855 the predial slavery *did* exist in Travancore and the fetters put on the aboriginal race was broken in that year, and the condition of those who thus regained freedom has been gradually improving. They enjoy now the same amount of personal liberty and protection as the high castes. The influence for good of this fair treatment has been most marked.

## ELEVATION OF DEPRESSED CLASSES.

The policy of H. H's. Government consists in giving them facility for education, in granting them land for occupation, and in providing for their representation in the Popular Assembly. It was in pursuance of this policy that the Darbar has declared Pulayas, Pariahs, Kanikars, Koravas, Ayyanas and Valans as the depressed classes eligible for grant of lands on concessional terms. A limit of 3 acres per family has been fixed. No back-arrears for occupation are claimed. Ground value is remitted. Tree value is not charged. Lands are ear-marked for assignment to members of each depressed class. The feeling gathered ground that the past was wrong, that every human being has human rights and privileges and that self-respect is not the privilege of a chosen few. They found in Mr. Aiyar Kali, a leader well worth following. To his great influence is due the present awakening of the Cherumars and their consequent fight for rights of citizenship.

Whatever value there may be in any class changing its name, what *does* matter is social and moral uplift which the leaders of the depressed classes have to realise. In the

fifties of the last century, the Missionaries were the first to put their shoulders to the wheel of the low and the depressed, and Mr. Nagam Aiya rightly regarded it then as the sole privilege of glory left to the casteless Britisher to claim. With the advancement of civilisation, the cause of the depressed classes is taken up by the Government on the one hand and the Hindu revivalists on the other, both of whom alike have entered the lists to contest the claims of the Christian Missionaries and to attack the problem in different ways. It fell to a Dewan like Sir P. Rajagopalachari to commence to contribute materially to the up-lifting of these communities, while advanced Hindus like Dewan Bahadur A. Govinda Pillay and Mr. K. G. Seshier (both retired High Court Judges) have befriended the Pulaya and the coast Christian communities.

### NEW LIFE.

The result is that the depressed classes are quick with new life. The Tiyanakara Pulaya school started 7 years ago and conducted now continues to do good work under the auspices of the Theosophical Lodge to which it has been transferred. The Sankumukham School commenced 3 years after that, for the benefit of the Christian folk, is in a flourishing condition. The Pulaya School at Balaramapuram under the eye of Aiyan Kali, the Pulaya representative of the Popular Assembly, has 100 boys on its rolls. Likewise, the night-school at Manakad is worthy of mention. In striving after their legitimate movement and development, the depressed classes will do well to follow the sound advice given them by a statesman that, whatever other people might do for them, they would make a substantial progress only if they learn to help themselves and that they should try to keep well with the other communities in the State. This sympathetic friend of theirs who really felt drawn to them, told them the plain truth that their community was now untouchable, mainly because it was so dirty and that they could not be brought into the category of touchables, unless they made themselves fit for it by absolute cleanliness. A hopeful and healthy sign of the times is that the number of persons who

look upon the curse of untouchability as incompatible with any modern theory of human worth and dignity, is ever on the increase. The Cherumar Sangham and the Depressed Class Missions should pin such men down to their programme of work and progress.

## II. The Ezhavas.

### THEIR IMMIGRATION.

The first wave of immigration brought with them the cultivators of palm trees. They bear different names in different parts of the country. In South Travancore and on the other side of the Ghats, they go under the name of *Shunars*; in Central Travancore they are known as *Ilavas*; in North Travancore their designation is *Choganmars*; in Malabar they are called *Tiyas*; and in South Canara, *Bilwas* is the name—a slightly modified form of the term *Ilava*. Their name is commonly derived from a root, meaning an island, and the common tradition is that they immigrated into the West Coast from Ceylon. Mr. H. A. Stuart, the Superintendent of the Madras Census of 1891, thinks that probably the connecting link between the word "Dweepam" and "Tiya" survives in the caste name "Divas," which is returned from South Canara. In support of this theory, Bishop Caldwell, the great Missionary-Scholar of South India, observes that the general and natural course of migration would doubtless be from the mainland to the island, but there may occasionally have been reflex waves of migration even in the earliest times, as there were certainly later on, traces of which survive in the existence, in Tinnevely and the West Coast, of castes whose traditions and even, in some instances, whose names connect them with Ceylon. They forced the earliest tribes to keep moving on, when they themselves came to be pushed from behind by fresh-comers. Their hereditary occupation is palm-cultivation.

### THEIR AFFINITY TO NAIRS.

There is much in the manners and customs of the Ezhavas similar to those of the Nairs. In the first place, the Ezhavas

too, took to archery and horsemanship and they were warriors in early times. There is frequent reference to the Chova army in the early warring days of Travancore. Mr. Rice, in his Mysore Inscriptions, points out that "they were employed by former rulers as foot-soldiers and body-guards, being noted for their fidelity". The Ezhava proper is distinct from other classes of them such as the Pandy Ezhavas and the Pachili Ezhavas. The *Illam* classification is current among the Ezhavas proper, such as the *Mut Illam*, the *Matampi Illam* and the *Choti Illam*. Marriage among Ezhavas consists of two parts—*Talikettu* and *Mangalam*. The one is done before the girl comes of age. The other is the consummation performed after the girl attains puberty. As among the Nairs, the rule of the Karanavan and the Matriarchal law obtain among them. Their social organisation is also by *Karas* and *Muris*, and social disputes are enquired into and settled by arbitration by the headmen of the *kara*. In the matter of apparel too, the Ezhava men do not differ much from the Nairs, while, in the case of the women, the difference is but slight; and above all, Malayalam is their common language. These show that the Ezhavas and the Nairs were distinctly Dravidians who, from opposite directions, crossed and converged each other in the Malayalam country with a mass of common tradition at their back. They reduced to slavery the remnants of the vanquished aboriginal tribes. They represent the best type of the peasant population.

### THEIR RAPID ADVANCEMENT.

Mr McLean says the country was originally divided between a race of Brahmins or priests, called Nambudris and a Military tribe called Nairs—these two holding in subjection the agriculturists of the country consisting of persons called the *Tiyas*. The majority of them confine themselves to tree-tapping, the original craft of the race, as indeed it was the occupation of the primitive South Indian races. But now, a considerable number of them has taken to agriculture and trade; they are a hardworking and industrious people.



They have advanced at a pace which puts to shame their congeners of the East Coast. They now form a solid community which has, by strenuous efforts, been released from the bondage of centuries. Large numbers of them now represent high culture. Some are authors; others take to medicine; some are editors; others again hold Government offices in the country.

It has been rightly remarked that no Government can, in matters like these, go very much ahead of public opinion, and that it has been possible for it to proceed vigorously of late with the task of improving the backward classes out of their backwardness. This has been due to the remarkable change in the public opinion and to the dawn of consciousness in the mind of the dominant classes that the claims of those less fortunate than they, have to be and are recognised and respected. On every side, there are signs of active advancement, and no pains they spare to prove themselves eminently fitted to enjoy the rights and blessings of freedom and right citizenship.

### THEIR NEW OUTLOOK.

This awakening is entirely due to the influence of Sree Narayana Guru, their present-day pontiff and spiritual head. He is a modern *yogi*, a great advocate of temperance, a social and religious reformer and a sound sanskrit scholar. Under his guidance, the S. N. D. P. Yogam, the organ of the community, has done and is doing excellent work. This institution has over 1200 members on its rolls, and about a hundred local branches have been affiliated to it. The three planks on the platform of this movement are the anti-caste campaign for the removal of disabilities affecting public roads, public schools and public service on the civic side and of restrictions affecting entry into Hindu temples on the religious side; and anti-drink movement on the social side as affecting their communal craft of tree-tapping. The high ways are no longer the exclusive monopoly of the caste-Hindus; and disabilities as regards admission to public schools and public

service have been removed by Government. The curse of untouchability on the civic side has almost become a thing of the past. The problem of temple-entry, the offspring of the same curse, has however been successfully solved by the Tiya Guru by the establishment of temples and mutts in different parts of the State solely set apart for the use of the Tiyas. It is true that the Sirkar Temples maintained out of the public revenue are closed to them. On this subject, Mr Kumaran, a leader of the new movement, has himself admitted at the recent Cochin Conference, that temple-entry is a question in which the caste-Hindus are vitally interested, since they too, labour under some restriction or other in the matter of worship, the difference being one of degree. At the same Conference, Mr. Iyyappan, a champion of the anti-caste movement, openly declared that he was ostracised by the Tiya community for interdining with Pulayas and refused, on that account, admission to the communal temples of his caste. He rightly deplored that, while they were asking for removal of all social barriers between themselves and the so-called higher castes, they, in their turn kept up those very same hard-and-fast lines with regard to their relationship with the Pulayas; and he frankly and fearlessly pointed out that it was meaningless on their part to ask for rights when they had failed to discharge their obligations. Their Guru has taught them that there is only one religion and one caste and that the thousand and one distinctions only pave the way for mutual hatred between man and man. In regard to the religious independence of the Tiyas those in charge of Hindu religious institutions have less excuse for excluding members who profess the same faith than the the Tiyas for their non-contribution to caste-temples and non-co-operation in the matter of outside service connected with annual festivals. Sir T. Sadasivier's doubt, at the Bezvada Social League, whether there could be any objection to any human being entering any temple is sustained by the hope that the All-Merciful God would not be so hard upon those who are now refused admission into the temple. As a result of the Guru's teachings, the community

has declared itself against drink, and with a view to discourage the drink habit, has been carrying on for some time a very active and energetic Anti-Drink campaign. It has been rightly observed that "the increasing agitation against tree-tapping in Travancore is not merely a passing local phase". As in British India, the reactionary longing to go back to the "ancient pristine simplicity of life," of the latter-day Nationalism here also has made temperance one of the main planks of Nationalist programme of which Mr. Madhavan is the leader and therefore known as the "Pussyfoot" of Travancore. In advocating prohibition, it is all important that the leaders should make a reservation in favour of tapping as a craft undivorced from the dignity of labour. It has been found that a tapper earns on average something like Rs. 50 per mensem—an income which compares favourably with that of the Graduate quill-driver in a public office even though he be of the favoured communities. It is no exaggeration that between the sturdy muscular tapper and the anaemic book-worm Graduate, the former should in one sense be preferred as a more useful type of citizen.

### SOCIAL LEGISLATION.

A Bill affecting the system of inheritance among the Ezhavas is now on the legislative anvil—another indication of new life with which the Tiya movement throbs. With a view to provide for unrepresented communities and to give voice to Ezhava representatives on a measure affecting their system of inheritance, two delegates, Mr. Parameswaran and Mr. Kumaran, have been nominated as members of the Council. Mr. Parameswaran is the spokesman of a section of the Ezhava community that stands for orthodox traditions. Mr. Kumaran represents the liberal section of the Ezhavas responsible for the introduction of the present Bill. Mr. Govindan of the Judicial service has also been asked to a seat in the Council as an exponent of the measure. Under the prudent and progressive guidance of its leaders and with the sympathetic co-operation of the enlightened

sections of other communities, the future of the Tiya community is assured. Radical changes fought for on principles of equity, however denounced as unjust or mocked as visionary at first, will, in fullness of time come, to be accepted as a matter of course.

### III. The Nairs.

#### THEIR ARRIVAL.

The next wave of immigration brought the Nairs of whom Sir W. W. Hunter records that for ages they were hereditary warriors and appear as a military nobility in the early Portuguese records of the 15th century, and that they are now distinguished alike for their success in their intellectual professions as barristers, judges and administrators and for their manly vigour in arms. They have always been essentially a martial people and form a distinct race of compact nationality. They appear to have entered Malabar from the north and were probably the offshoot of some colony in Konkan or Deccan. The Tiyas who moved by the S. W. and the Nairs who have found their way by N. W. passes appear to have converged and crossed each other in Central Malabar, as the Dravidians and the Colarians and the Tibeto-Burmans have done in Central India in the early movement of the Indian races. The Nairs who, like the Dravidians, proved the stronger, broke up the Tiyas and the mass of the earlier tribes whose scattered fragments, like those of the Colarians and Tibeto-Burmans, were thrust aside to mountains and pathless forests. Like the Dravidians, the Nairs rushed forward and formed a huge and permanent settlement. Though they were subdued by the higher civilization of the later Brahmin immigrants, they were never broken up. They willingly associated themselves with the Brahmins. And this intermingling of the races has been felicitous in its results.

#### MILITARY MADAMPIS.

They were hereditary warriors. Their warriorhood is attested by their civil organisation. In former times, each petty Raja, under the great Swarupam of Rajas, ruled his own

portion of territory designated a *Naud* and was named Naduvazhi. He was not considered a Naduvazhi who had not at least 100 Nairs under him. Next in rank were some other still smaller rulers called Desavazhi (the Military Chief of a Desam). Both the Nauduvazhi and the Desavazhi possessed quasi-sovereign-authority over their Naud and Desam. They had to pay no regular tax to the king for the lands in their possession. Only they were bound to render military service. A powerful sovereign or over-lord kept the subordinate military in feudal subjection with all the privileges of rank and perquisites appertaining thereto. When the over-lord died, the country was held in small groups by the Nair nobility. Thus arose the class of Madampis or Nair Jenmies who leased out their lands on tenure to inferior castemen whom they in return reduced to being their tenants. The Madampis were a sort of chiefs with limited powers but their main function was to maintain bodies of armed retainers under them, not exceeding a hundred in number. They had to pay succession fee known Purushendram; the annual tribute known as Andukazhcha; protection-fee known as Reksha-bhogam; and a special cess known as Kettutengu on their coconut gardens. The family of Madampis included the Punjar Raja; the Pandarathinmars; the Tambrakkanmars; the Tiruvapadanmars; the Koilemmars; the Paliyattu Menon; the Vadayathu Menon; the indigenous Madampimars; the foreign Madampimars; the Naickenmars; and the Varienmars. Some of these families have become extinct, while others are very much reduced in circumstance; a few are still found in a favourable condition. Among these may be mentioned Mulakkazhathu Kurup; Kanjirampalli Kartha; Paniyath Kartha who was the minister of the Vadakumkur Raja; Thuruthikad Karta; Chellattu Kurup *alias* Taisseri Kurup; Manaveli Menon; Keezhanjali Panickar; Aikara Kaimal; Cherattakkad Kurup; Avaloor Panickar whose family still draws a pension from the Government; Madathil Karta and Meenappalli Menon. It is a remarkable fact that among the Madampis was included Andraver, a Christian; Tekkedath Pattar; Nedumpurath Nambiyar; Varillathu Empran, and

Arumpakkumadathil Pattar—a fact which is proof positive of the hearty and healthy co-operation which then existed among the several communities. There is quite a mass of historical and contemporary evidence in support of their military efficiency. We have in *Velakali* a survival of the ancient military costume of the Nairs. The *Oachira* Olympics and the *Onam* are two typical Nair festivals—one reminiscent of the warring days of old, and the other of the piping days of peace.

### NAGA GENESIS.

In describing the appearance and apparel of the Nairs the following extract from an old Vattezhuttu document speaks of them as *Nagathars*—an appellation which gives unmistakable proof of their Naga tradition :—

“ Long heard and moustaches, forehead besmeared with ashes, cloth worn as *Palathar* (the lower end being drawn backwards between the thighs and fastened to the hinder part of the waist), one piece of cloth worn above the *Palathar*, wooden sandals, long hair, grave speech, broad chest, strong physique, long stout arms, able to shatter the furious lion's skull and ever prepared to fight. Thou, Oh! *Nagathan*, art the personification of hardy might.”

*Nagathars* they are even today, because they have been serpent-worshippers. They hold serpents in great veneration and a corner of the compound of every wealthy Nair house is set apart for their abode. There are thousands of such groves or *Karus* in the country, and the worship of the serpent-gods, deemed necessary for the affluence and prosperity of the house-hold, obtains to the present day. Within the limits of this sacred grove, serpent-idols are put up on a stone basement called *Chitrakudam* built for the purpose. These idols are propitiated with periodical offerings, by the eldest female member of the house, of *Neerum Pa'um*, that is, an ambrosial compound made up of flour, milk, water of the tender cocoanut, fruit of the Kadali plantain, ghee and honey. This is in harmony with the orthodox view that

Parasurama brought the first batch of Nair settlers from *Ahikshetra* or the land of Nagas from which the term "Nair" is derived.

### DRAVIDIAN DISTINCTIVENESS.

Whatever difference of opinion there may be as to their genesis, their Dravidian affinity is undisputable. Several old Malayalam writings show that Nair women wore the *Pambadam*—a kind of ear-ornament which marks out the Dravidian womenfolk on the other side of the Ghats. In North Travancore, a colony of Nairs, who call themselves Tamil Sudras, survives to this day and serves to show, in every respect, the intermediate stage in the fusion of manners and customs from which the present-day life of the Nairs has evolved. The evidence from language as to the race movement accords with this Dravidian affinity. The Vattezhuttu or original Tamil Alphabet was used throughout the peninsula south of Tanjore, including South Malabar and Travancore. Till about the end of the 17th century it was in general use. The substantial identity of old Malayalam with old Tamil has been proved by the ancient inscriptions in Travancore and Cochin. The folk-song poetry also indicates the direction from the South. From the primitive specimens of the Nairs, from their costume and customs, from the identity of language, from even the survival of patriarchy, as in the case of the Tamil Sudras alluded to above, and from numerous other circumstances, the probability of the Nairs having formed part of the Dravidian community in the plains is preponderating. They are Dravidian in the sense that there is no extraneous influence over them other than that of latter-day civilization and institutions. Sir William Robinson holds that the organisation of the country for agrarian, civil, social and administrative purposes, was the ordinary Hindu type and intimately allied to that of Tamil nationality—the cradle of its races, languages, and institutions.

### TARAVAUD SYSTEM.

Taravaud denotes their system of domestic life. The members of a Taravaud trace their descent from a common

ancestress. The large Taravauds set apart the property for common use. Any number of private families may be comprised in the Taravaud. Every member of a Taravaud has an equal share in the common stock—the infant as much as the aged. No member can claim his share, but the Taravaud as a body can make such division as it pleases of the common stock. When partition takes place, the Taravaud becomes cut up into as many Taravauds as the members may have settled to form among themselves. In the Taravaud, the entire property is managed by its senior member or *Karanavan* for the benefit of the whole family.

He becomes head by birth and resembles the father of a Brahmin family in respect of his rights and obligations. He has equal interest with other members and is the guardian and representative, for all purposes, of the property of every member within the Taravaud. He should decide what family ceremonies are necessary. He cannot renounce his rights and, as the head of the family, has entire control over the property. He may assign it for maintenance. He may delegate and resume management. He may resume property allotted for maintenance or, before proceeding otherwise, he may narrow his rights. He can hold private property, but is incompetent to alienate the Taravaud property, without the consent of the other members, except to supply its necessity or discharge its obligations or for its benefit. He is removable for mismanagement, for extravagance, for disregarding family interests or for incapacity, but not for any single act of misfeasance. If removed, he is eligible for maintenance and cannot be replaced by a stranger.

#### NEPOTISMAL NEXUS.

All Taravauds follow the Marumakkathayam Law of inheritance by which, though the property is held in theory to vest in the females only, the males and females have equal right. Practically the males are co-sharers with the females. Under this rule of nepotism, a man's property goes to his sisters; sisters' sons; sisters' daughters; mother; mothers's sisters; their children; maternal grand-mother; her sisters



and their children. Around the nucleus of this curious custom erroneous notions have abundantly accumulated.

One writer would call it a feature of the "communal state" of society from which the Nair Society has not completely advanced and in which "no son knows his own father." Another writer would maintain that the Nairs are related to the Tibetans or the Nepaulese or the Nagas and retain the law of inheritance obtaining among those races. A third one would argue that the Nairs still retain the Marumakathayam Law which prevailed among the Dravidians, from whom they branched off more than twenty centuries ago. A fourth theory is held by some, that the Nairs are descendants of a Southern tribe which once inhabited the now sea-submerged islands of the Antarctic or the Indian Ocean, and whose customs were all diametrically opposed to the "Makathayam" and other customs of the Northern (Aryan) tribe.

The Nair lords and noblemen of those days correspond to the barons and knights of early England. The *Viruthi* system, abolished only within a few years of late, was little short of a Royal grant for the maintenance of the militia, since those were days marked by an ever-waxing, never-ending, clannish clique and struggle for power and supremacy which constantly required the services of the military sons of soil. The humiliating reluctance which the Nairs felt accordingly to leave their property, in time of war, to the rude shock of continuous neglect or outside forces and influences, naturally induced them to have recourse to a judicious arrangement which made the descent to run in the female line. The daughters thus became the darlings of the race. This arrangement gave women considerable influence: admitted of their being, to a large extent, educated; and saved them from the pressing privations of Brahminical tyrannical widowhood. The matriarchal system of inheritance thus owes its origin among other things to the constitution and condition of the Nair society in the early times, the peculiar system of land-tenure then in vogue and to the genius of the Government of the ancient Rajahs.

## ALTERED SOCIAL LAW.

The pity of it was that erroneous notions found favour with jurists and administrators of law. Such a thing inflicted a cruel and unmerited stigma on the family life and status of this progressive community. The passing of the Nair Regulation marks an epoch in their social history. It declares that conjugal union known as *Sambandam* or *Pudava Koduka* or by other local name is not a casual or fugitive connection formed for the purpose of sexual gratification, but a solemn valid marriage. The new law which has legalised its validity has removed for ever the reproach that the ties of marriage were not respected among the Nairs. This is one of the noblest pieces of legislation on the statute book for which the Nair Society is beholden to Sir P. Rajagopala Chari who does not make any secret of his sincere solicitude for and his unfailing sympathy with the higher aims and aspirations of this community. Says he: "*So far as I am concerned, I may say that, having known the Nair community for nearly a quarter of a century, I had always felt that its domestic system was becoming increasingly unsuitable; that system was producing a growing amount of unhappiness; and, last but not least, the younger generation was being handicapped in the development of the qualities of steadiness and grit. As a sincere well-wisher of the community, I felt, from the very outset, that I should not neglect the opportunity afforded to me, by my appointment to the Dewanship of this State, to so modify, by legislation, the system as to remove, as far as possible, its injurious features; and I shall always look back upon this particular piece of legislation as one of the most important things which I have had a share in doing.*" It did not take much time for a legislation like this to produce its expected results upon a progressive community like them. For the Nair Regulation Amendment Bill now on the legislative anvil, striving for individual partition in the Nair family, is a fitting sequel and supplement to this original measure, calculated to push the community further to the forefront.

## NEO-NAIR MOVEMENTS.

It is an encouraging feature of the progressive Nair Society of to-day, that notwithstanding their sub-divisions into castes and sub-castes—such as the Kireathill Nair or the house-steward who held, in times of yore, high offices in the Civil and military services of the country, the Illakkar or tenants attached to Brahmin Illoms; the Sorubhakar bound by feudal service in Kshatria families; the Padanair or the warrior clan; the Manavalan or the cultivating branch; the Pallichanair or the bearers of the palanquins of princes and chiefs—that, notwithstanding such innumerable social and racial barriers, the community, as a whole, is adapting itself, with remarkable alacrity, to the altered conditions engendered by the new civic consciousness. Of this new movement, the late Mr. C. Krishna Pillay was the moving spirit. He strove to cement together the several sub-divisions into which the Nair community is split up. He founded Karayogams and Nair Samajams and welded them all into the Keraleeya Nair Samajam. This organised effort for the social uplift of the Nairs was the lineal descendant of the Malayali Sabha started several years before. One thing which the new Nairs forgot or at any rate failed to realise, was that, in a forward movement like theirs, everyone could not become its leader and that, while some one would hold that position, he should, for the time being, be followed by the others. The consequence was a split. Besides the old Samaj of which Dewan Bahadur A. Govinda Pillai was President, sprang up a Samastha Keraleeya Nair Samajam of which Mr. C. Krishna Pillay continued to be President till his death. In the cross purposes which each played at the other, both languished and had only a lingering existence. It was at this juncture a third leader entered the campaign. Mr. K. Parameswaran Pillai of Changanachari put renewed vigour into the Samastha Keraleeya Samajam which held 2 or 3 annual conventions. Four years ago, both the Samajams held separate conferences in Trivandrum during the same week. The better sense of the class advised a *rapprochement*. This advice was not lost upon either of the

separate Samajists. Each appointed a Committee to consider the terms of amalgamation. These Committees sat on the question for two years. At this time, a new association sprang up—the Nair Young Men's Association of which Mr. N. Raman Pillay (Retired Excise Commissioner) is the President and Mr. K. Narayana Menon (Retired Dewan Peishcar) the Treasurer. At its inaugural meeting, a subscription of Rs. 20,000 was raised on paper. Of this sum, Rs. 5,000 was collected. Mr. Narayana Menon donated lands and buildings worth Rs. 25,000 and the main object of the association was declared to be (1) to found a hostel for Nair boys; (2) and to institute foreign scholarships to Nair youngmen for industrial and agricultural training. It was at this stage that both the standing Committees of the Keraleeya Samajam and the Samastha Keraleeya Samajam went into a common Committee consisting of representatives from both, and Dewan Bahadur A. Govinda Pillai was commissioned to work out the amalgamation. At the instance of this Committee, a joint meeting of the old Samajams took place at the beginning of this year and it was resolved they should try to get incorporated with the Y. M. N. A. The latter was addressed on the subject and the Committee appointed to consider the legal effects of the amalgamation has sent up its report just now. With the concentration of their energies on matters which vitally affect their common interest, their communal jealousies and communal ill-feelings are bound to be a dead thing of the past. With the dawn of communal co-operation and corporate action, the moral and material advancement of the community is assured. Dewan Mr. Raghaviah who has rightly read the signs of such co-operative efforts says :—"There are not signs wanting in the community of a desire for special and material amelioration. This is reflected in the wide movement for a change in the laws of marriage and inheritance, as in the bill now before the Legislative Council for securing the necessary change. It is further reflected in the movement, though still very feeble, of joint stock concerns, with resources of the community pooled for promotion of business or industrial enterprises. There is also evidence of it, to some extent, in the

cooperative activities of the Karayogams." Though he feels there are occasions when and considerations for which communities should drop their individuality and join as one man for the state or the national cause, he holds it is none the less true that communal individuality and communal emulation are essential for the progress of communities. "Take away communal spirit and you kill communal individuality, reduce all communities to one dead level and retard progress. Let each community therefore combine for all good causes." This is his advice.

#### IV. Nambudiris.

##### PARASURAMA-TRADITION.

The Brahmins came next. They of the southern country or Dravida are known as Pancha Dravidas who consist of Malayala Brahmins, Tamil Brahmins, Kanarese Brahmins and Mahratta Brahmins, and each of whom represents, for the respective linguistic area, the caste, creed and cult of the Arya Brahmins of Brahma Varta, Brahma Rishis Desa, and Madhya Desa of Ancient India. The Malabar Brahmins are true representatives of primitive Vedism. Unlike the rest of them Brahmins, they were able to maintain a high level of religious seclusion and sanctity. Easily therefore they became the socio-spiritual aristocracy of Malabar. They form the foremost landed aristocracy. They are the first Brahmin colonists with whom Parasurama is said to have peopled the land of his reclamation. The Parasurama-tradition about the social and political organisation of the country is preserved in Sahyadri Khandam of the *Skanda Purana*, in the *Sankara Smrithi* which is the great Teacher's epitome of *Bhargava Smrithi* or the ordinances of Bhargava or Parasurama and in the *Kerala Mahatmyam*, *Kerala Oolpathi* and other works. The heroic figure of Parasurama has continued to inspire literary men down to our own times, and it is a remarkable fact that the deeds of the sworn enemy of the Kshatriyas form the subject of *Parasu Rama Vijayam* by a leading Kshatriya who, by the qualities of his genius, is known as the *Kerala Kalidasa*.

As a common inheritance of the people, the tradition has passed into their every-day life. Even allowing for what the critics of the tradition desire, the fact remains that Parasurama is a profound reality. Parasurama's campaigns against the Kshatriyas probably signalize the struggle between the Church and the State which has arisen everywhere in the early history of the world. In Europe, the State got the better of the Church, while in India, the Church got the better of the State. Hence, the supremacy of the priests came to be established. It is quite in keeping with the historical trend of events that the Brahmins, headed by Parasurama, became early settlers in the new-found land. There was apparently none to compete with the powerful priestly race for the lordship of the land. And if their ecclesiastical pursuits prevented them from taking to the plough, the condition of society at the time largely favoured the utilization of the services of other classes of people as their tenants-at-will.

## RISE OF ESTATES AND CHIEFSHIPS.

Apart from the Parasurama-tradition, the peculiar conditions of Malabar arrested the normal development of ryotwari holdings. In the first place, the physical features did not favour such formation. The martial spirit and organisation of Nairs stood against the establishment of a Central Government or a system of Land Revenue. The Nair Jenmies naturally cared to hold their lands free of State Revenue, on condition of supplying the Raja with military men. As observed by Mr. Baden Powell in his "Land Revenue Systems of British India", the petty chiefs claimed no general Land Revenue but were content with mesne and miscellaneous income. Then again, the matriarchal family system of the Nairs and the supreme influence of the Namburis contributed to the preservation of large family estates and accumulation of land in the hands of Brahmins and temple-trustees. The granting of land in this manner to Brahmins and Devaswoms was and is still considered an act

of merit. Thus in course of time, some of the landed proprietors among the Brahmins rose to the position of Nauduvazhis and Desavazhis and two of them even became rulers of petty kingdoms. Of course, the majority of Nauduvazhi chiefs were Nairs, the rest being Namburis, Kshatriyas, Ambalavasis and certain ecclesiastical heads.

### DEVASWOM DOMINANCE.

The Devaswom in those early days occupied a peculiar position answering to the Catholic Churches in the middle ages and exercised temporal authority. To have *Kshetra Sambandham*, or authority of some kind or other in connection with temples, was considered a great honor by princes and chiefs and the wonder of it was, that they intrigued and fought to obtain it, irrespective of the situation of such institutions even outside their domain. The chiefs of Calicut, Palghat and Kakkad acquired such power over the Thirumala Devaswom in the Cochin territory; so did the Rajas of Vadakumkoor, Paravur and Porakad in the Travancore territory, acquire similar power over the Devaswoms of Vadakkunnathan, Perumanam and Kudalmanikkam in Cochin; so did Cochin, in its turn, acquire similar power over Thiruvalla and Haripad Devaswoms in Travancore. The relics of such fight for power over religious institutions survive to this day. Thus it will be seen, that Parasurama's gift of the whole land to the Namburis is not of the type of the Pope's gift of the new-world to Spain. The fact is, as recorded in the Cochin State Manual, that the Namburis obtained property-right not by divine favour but more prosaically by gift, purchase or usurpation from the immigrants who settled in the country long before them.

In these circumstances, it is absurd to ignore the Brahmin inroad under Parasurama, which influenced society and religion and changed the course of progress in diverse ways. However apocryphal Parasurama's gift of lands to the Namburis be, we have authentic records of gifts of lands to them by the reigning sovereigns. Even so late as in 1787, the Ruler of Travancore issued a Royal *Neet* making

a gift of considerable landed properties to the Namburians of Cheppuram, Perumanam and Irinjalkkuda. The gifts comprised not merely lands but also dignities and offices. This shows how the spirit of the Parasurama-tradition has not been lost in the policy of the latter-day rulers.

### VILLAGE ORGANIZATION.

In their statistical memoirs, Messrs. Ward and Conner truly observe that, if Kerala was not created for the priesthood, it was at least early adjudged to their obedience. Mr. R. C. Dutt says:—"Still further rolled away [the waves of Aryan influence and the country beyond the Krishna river received Aryan civilization and religion. Three kingdoms—those of the Cholas, the Cheras and the Pandyas—had arisen in the extreme south of India several centuries before the Christian era." Prof. McCrindle avers:—"The Brahmins of South India appear in those days to have consisted of a number of communities settled in separate parts of the country and independent of each other." This, as Lassen remarks, is in harmony with the tradition according to which the Aryan Brahmins were represented as having been settled by Parasurama in 64 villages. It is to the inhabitants of one of these villages that Ludovic di Varthema, who left Europe for India in 1502, refers when he writes:—"The first class of pagans in Calicut are called Brahmins. The second *Nacri* (Nairs)." The writings of Ptolemy and Periplus give unmistakable evidence of Brahmin settlement on the Malabar Coast in the first century A. D. There is evidence also that, in the fourth and the fifth centuries, large hordes of them came during the ascendancy of the Chalukya kings. It has been truly remarked that the Aryan colonisation of South India was effected not by force of arms but by arts of peace. The Brahmin colonists conciliated the natives by adapting themselves to the new environments, while at the same time they diffused around them a halo of higher civilisation. Dr. Hunter says:—"They became the fathers of the less advanced races and although they classified the non-Aryas as Sudras, yet this term did not connote the ideas of



debasement and servitude which it affixed to non-Aryan races in the North." They protected their interests as great landed proprietors by organising their 64 colonies into 4 circles of 16 villages each. These circles were Parappar, Perinchallur, Pazhayannur and Chengannur. This last one is in Travancore.

### LAND-LORDISM.

After the fall of the *Rakshapurusha* or protectorate, it was governed by 18 rich Brahmin jenmis. In those days, all the lands were owned by the Brahmin jenmis and some of them, like the Edamana Pandarathil, had territorial control, as manifest from their writs which conclude with "*Desadipathi* so and so". The Vanjipuzhai chief is the modern representative of the Parasurama-settlement of the olden days. He was the pontiff of the Namburis on this side of the coast, and he owns even today several Edavagas or tracts of land given him rent-free in the warring days of early Travancore history. He was then a semi-sovereign land-lord.

He is liable to the various vicissitudes common to contracts as between ordinary landlords and tenants. As observed by the late Maharaja of Travancore, the position of such people was somewhat of the Land-graves and Margraves of the middle ages in Europe, but owing to the all-sweeping influence of latter-day Government, they ceased to possess the sovereign privileges of levying taxes, punishing crime, dispensing justice, or, for the matter of that, even compelling his defaulting tenants to pay the dues except through the Law Courts. Under the Royal Proclamation they were deprived of all powers and significance of sovereignty. Along with the acceptance of this altered position, the jenmis as a class ceased to find any legitimate facility to recover their dues. The ordinary jenmis have sought for a further change of law in their favour and the matter is pending decision on the basis of a commission-report. But the feudal chiefs or semi-sovereign jenmis like those of Kilimanocor and Edapalli, came in course of time to be released from the operation of

the Proclamation and empowered to recover taxes from their tenants according to the "Revenue Recovery Act."

### CREDAL CONGREGATIONS.

In the early history of the Namburi castes, we find a division into two parties, namely the Panniyur congregation following the Vaishnavite faith, and the Chovur faction adopting that of Siva. The latter finally prevailed and has since been incorporated with the Vedanta-Doctrine of Sankaracharya, himself believed to have been a Numburi. It was, at the decline of the Chalukya Kings, the Saivite school became ascendant. This was fostered by the Chera Kings. The Chovur Gramam which belongs to the Saivite school thus got the better of the Punniyur Gramam. Sankaracharyar, the apostle of the Hindus declared sectarian neutrality as an inviolable law and universalized the Hindu religion. This was about 800 A. D. He founded schools of learning all over India—at Badrinath in the north at Dwaraka in the west, at Puri in the east and at Sringeri in the south, and in the *Madhas* of his native Malabar. In the temple at Badrinath, the officiating priest continues to this day to be a Namburi Brahmin of Sankaracharya's caste, whose nomination vests in the Maharajah of Travancore. The organization of the Numburis is by Gramas or Villages, as that of the Nairs is by Taras or lands. The Numburi community of the present day is split up into two religious factions namely, the Tirunavai group and the Trichur league, each presided over by a Vadhyar or high priest. The highest order of the Numburis is called the Namburipad or one who has performed a public sacrifice. The illustrious house of Alvanchery Tamprakal stands foremost in rank and exercises to this day the right of ministration on the coronation day of the rulers of Travancore and Cochin. Eight such families of religious reputation exist to this day under the name of Ashtagrahatil Adhyar. These eight families are Poovalli; Uzhappamun; Varikkacherry; Kadalur; Purayannur; Oralacherry, Mepad; and Edamana.

### CASTE CLEAVAGES.

Besides these, there are certain classes of Numburics who have forfeited their original status on account of their having

pursued callings independent of the study of the Vedas. Such are the physician-Namburies known as Ashtagraha Vaidyar, or eight families of physicians who, having from ancient times devoted themselves to the study of medicine, are recognised and resorted to by the people as hereditary physicians. Such are again the soldier-Namburies, called Sasthrangakars, who constituted the ancient militia of 36000 men, named Rekshapurushas or protectors of the realm. The Sasthrakali, or performance with swords and shields, obtains to this day. Such are also the Sankethika Namburies who, not prepared for the initial troubles incidental to colonisation, went back to the land they came from, but returned when order was restored and peace began to reign. Under this class are included the Tiruvella Desis, or those who betook themselves to the place of that name, and the Karnat and Tulu Desis who immigrated to the southern districts. Such are some of the main divisions of the Namburi classes of to-day. Sir Seshia Sastri hits off most happily the leading traits of this class of people when he writes:—"The proud Namburi Brahmin land-lord who traces his ancestry and his tenure through several thousands of years and whose anxiety to preserve the dignity of the family is indicated by the strict law of entail by which the disintegration of his property is prevented, is yet a victim of indebtedness caused chiefly as elsewhere by the variously expensive character of the marriage of his daughter and by his unbounded charity and hospitality."

#### PRINCIPLE OF PRIMOGENITURE.

As extensive land-owners, the Namburies possess immense wealth. The family property is owned and enjoyed in common by all the members of family. Division of family property is forbidden. It is rarely or never practised. The law of inheritance is Makkathayam by which the *makkal*, or sons, are the legal heirs of a man's property. But the estate is cut off from all the heirs-general. The eldest son alone inherits his father's wealth. Others merely claim support from him. Those who can claim such support are the males of the family, their wives, their virgin daughters, and widows

while residing in the house. Owing to the expensive character of marriage which is due to the practice of making large endowments to the bridegroom as well as to the anxiety to let the property pass undivided, the eldest son alone is allowed to marry. If he be without issue, he may marry one or two additional wives. If the eldest brother still have no children or die without issue, the next in succession may marry, and so on.

### PERPETUATION OF FAMILY.

When the family is in danger of extinction, it is the common practice to give the daughter of the house in marriage to a Namburi and to take him into the Illom which is the house-name of the Namburis. This is known as "Sarvasvadharm" marriage according to which the whole estate of the father-in-law passes after his death to the management of his son-in-law. He is moreover disentitled to property, if he fails to beget any issue. This is peculiar to Namburis alone. Adoption is also made to perpetuate a Namburi family in the following three ways—I. "Patukayyil" adoption or one in which five persons take part. II. "Chamathu" adoption in which a pan of sacred twigs of *Ficus religiosa* is burnt. III. "Koodivachu" adoption in which a surviving widow or an old man adopts an heir by merely taking him into the house. Mr. J. D. Mayne says that the last form of adoption obtains in the Mithula country, under the name of *krithrama* adoption.

### SOCIAL PECULIARITIES.

The women of the Namburis are called *Antharjanams* or inside folks. They are guarded with jealousy. The institution of caste-investigation, or a Court of enquiry in case of adultery; the terrible method of pronouncing sentence against an adulteress; the disposal of children after guilty career; the ordeal that suspected persons have to undergo; their loss of caste and social position; all this unmistakably points to a very severe phase of their social peculiarities. The adoption of the front tuft, the celebration of the *Samavartanam* at a

late age, the introduction of a peculiar intonation in the recitation of the Veda, the wearing of a single *Yagnopavitam* instead of two as the outward emblem of a married man, the option of all sons, save the eldest, to marry or not, the sufficiency of feeding a single Brahmin instead of two at the *Sraddham*, are a few of their peculiar observances which mark them out from the Brahmins of the East Coast. And yet, in the words of the State Manual, the marrying after puberty, the keeping of the hair and the putting on of the sandal-paste caste-marks on the forehead by the widows, the wearing of white cloths among husband-living women, the marrying on Saturdays, fixing of a *Muhurtham* (auspicious hour) for the *Sanchayanam* and other practices of the Malabar colonists to-day represent an epoch of history in the old country, now quite forgotten.

#### NEW NAMBURIS.

It is a healthy sign of theirs that the new representatives of the primitive vedism of ancient India have come out of the old groove and are endeavouring to march abreast of the times. Schools are started, Sabhas are organised, and Conferences are held for the benefit of the members of the community. The Kulakada Pandarathil, a rich lord of the manor, is the originator and organiser of an English School in the Kottarakkarai Taluq. This school has been recently removed to a commodious building constructed by him at considerable cost. The Namburi landlords have begun to bestir themselves and derive the full advantages of education which alone will arrest the tendency on their part to decline materially. The Census figures show a decline in their numerical strength; and what is worse, this tendency to decline is seen in their material condition too. Whatever the cause, the latest verdict is as follows:—"During the past two decades they have executed as many as 2,737 Kanapattam documents involving about 8,000 acres of land, which till then remained inalienable, while they have heavily encumbered jenmam lands covering an area of about 6,000 acres, and absolutely parted with their rights over 1,500 acres approximately. The total amount of indebtedness, excluding

Kanam transactions, may be estimated at about 10 lacs of rupees." This may not be much when compared with the capitalized wealth of their estates in the country. All the same, it behoves these Namburis, who have been landlords of great antiquity, to make every endeavour to cease to be the victims of such indebtedness.

They have organised a Congress for the social and political amelioration of the community. Among the several measures taken by the Sabha to make up its record of progress during last year, one that is worthy of special mention is the arrangement made to afford relief to the members of the community who had been hard hit by the Moplah disturbances in Malabar. This is quite in keeping with the instinctive spirit of philanthropy characteristic of the Namburis as a class. It is gratifying that the Nambudiri Sabha is actively at work in devising means and methods for their social and political advancement. In the newly constituted Council, Trivikramar Vasudevar, familiarly known as the Maraseri Pottl, has been returned as a duly elected member to represent their constituency. These are unmistakable marks of the new consciousness to which the nonchalant Namburi community has awakened.

## V. The East-Coast, or Non-Malayala, Brahmins.

### WHO THEY ARE.

Of the Pancha Dravida Brahmins, the Namburis, as we have seen, are the typical Brahmins in Malayalam India. The Tamil Brahmins, the Canarese Brahmins, the Telugu Brahmins and the Maharashtra Brahmins who represent the class in their respective linguistic areas form the general group of East Coast Brahmins who have immigrated into Travancore. Unlike the Malayala Brahmins, they do not maintain the characteristic religious seclusion of the Namburis. Their manners and customs differ essentially from those of the Namburis. They represent the custom of the old country in contrast with that of their colonised confederates of the new one. These non-Malayala Brahmins are

called *Paradesa* Brahmins for the reason that they were later immigrants from the neighbouring countries. Of them, the Tamils were the earliest to come and the largest in numbers to settle. They settled in *Samuham*s or villages and each *Samuham* has a separate Council at which all the village affairs are discussed and decided. They have identified themselves so far with the Namburi colonists that they worship *Sastha* and *Bhagavathi*—deities whom Parasurama has ordained to propitiate by celebration of periodical *pujas*.

### HOW THEY CAME.

The orthodox piety of a long line of Maharajas, inspired by the traditions of the past, is responsible for the exodus of this class of Brahmins. As custodians of and experts in Vedic literature and religious rites, they were invited for spiritual purposes. The palace purohit and pandit, known as *Dikshitar* or chaplain, and the Vedic reciters, who follow the Maharajah for service in the temple, represent the class of people brought down for religious purposes. The lovely aspect of the country, the humane Government of the Maharajahs, and the easy and peaceful life of the people made Travancore highly inviting. The peace-loving Brahmins found in the happy valley of Travancore ample scope for sweet communion with the Most High.

The liberal patronage which all branches of knowledge were sure to find in the Court of Travancore was not the least inviting. Pandits and scholars had been even in requisition by the great former Maharajahs and Ranies of Travancore when, within the last 100 years, the beginnings of Vernacular Schools under State management were made. It is a well-known fact that the Rani-Regent sought and secured the services of the Sastris settled in Karamanai for the compilation of suitable text-books. Even to-day while the Maharajah is at his meal, the court-musicians (who are all Brahmins) sing and play on musical instruments in an adjoining room. During the *Dasara*, he has to attend discussions of a college of Pandits consisting of learned men of the land and many

from distant parts of India to whom rewards are given for distinguished learning, according to merits.

The unflinching liberality and the free feeding of the State gave them complete relief from the worry and trouble of life on the East Coast. The cheap living and the peculiar social customs of the people allured many into the country. The extensive tracts of lands which only waited to be touched by the hand of man to smile on him with plenty, the natural richness of the country and the never-failing monsoons also formed a powerful charm. As soon as peace was declared from one end of the country to the other and the charity of the Maharajah shewed itself in the opening of free feeding-houses, a regular exodus from the east began in right earnest. The Brahmins who are unnecessarily stigmatised as an inordinately home-loving class, shook off all ancestral considerations and repaired in large numbers into Travancore. Since then, small colonies of Brahmins have been settling down about the Dharmasalas, and many new villages have sprung into existence.

Again, in the caste-system of the Malayalees there is no trader-class, says the Travancore Census Commissioner of 1921 and adds that even to-day, big merchants and traders are not Malayalees and that they have taken to trade only lately and on a very limited scale. This gave an impetus to the exodus of Brahmin grain-merchants cloth-dealers, stock-brokers and money-lenders. Thus it will be seen that the Pandit, the merchant, the poor and the helpless found in Travancore the fulfilment of their hopes as well as the means of their livelihood.

### ROYAL GIFT OF LANDS.

If Parasurama's gift of land to the earlier immigrants be apocryphal, Rama Rajah's gift of lands to these later colonists furnishes its authentic sequel in modern times. The Royal writ of 25th Ma'caram 928 M. E. relates to the gifts of lands and appurtenances to the Brahmins at Mahadanapuroin. The Royal writ of 4th Kanni 940 M. E. records the grant of land to the Brahmins to settle down in



Asramom. According to the Royal writ dated 8th Kanni 949 M. E., lands were granted as *artha danam* to the Brahmin-villagers of Parvathipuram. An order of 1004 M. E. records that it was not usual to levy any tax on house-sites in Brahmin villages. The *Brahmadayom* and *Bhattavriti* tenures in Shencottah Taluk prove likewise the genesis of these Pandya Brahmin colonists. The king's gifts were confined only to the learned pandits who visited his Court or to purohiths who led pure lives of piety and sanctity. There is nothing phenomenal or class-favouring in such gifts. For, gifts of lands have been made even to the Christian missionaries for educational and medical purposes. The acts of gift, therefore, reflect only the spirit of the times in encouragement of everything meritorious. The tradition of the Namburi Rakshapurushas or protectors of the realm reclaimed by Parasurama finds and furnishes its historical parallel in the creation of modern Travancore by the efforts of these people. Unlike the Namburis, these later arrivals retain intact all the characteristics peculiar to the Aryan type of which they are the true representatives.

### HEREDITARY CULTURE.

They are split up into subdivisions according to their religious faith. Of this we shall speak later on in the section treating of Hinduism. The Brahmins were hereditary priests. Learning was, as everywhere in the early times, their monopoly. They had absolute power in the promulgation and elucidation of ancient law. The Indian arts and sciences were the fruits of their sole devotion to the progressive state of mankind. Religion, society and literature were the powerful manifestations of their extraordinary intellect and benevolent activity. They accomplished most of the purposes of writing by their remarkable memory which is now considered one of the most wonderful feats of intellectual gymnastics. They were in brief Apostles of Hindu culture and Hindu progress. Of them, the late Sir W.W. Hunter, the most historical voice of the last century, writes thus:—  
 "The Brahmins were a body of people who, in an early stage

of this world's history bound themselves by a rule of life, the essential precepts of which were self-culture and self-restraint. As they married within their own caste, begot children only during their prime, and were not liable to lose the finest of their youth in war, they transmitted their best qualities in an ever-increasing measure to their descendants. The Brahmins of the present day are the result of three thousand years of hereditary education and self-restraint, and they have evolved a type of mankind quite distinct from the surrounding population. The Brahmin is an example of a class becoming the ruling power in a country not by force of arms but by rigour of hereditary culture and temperance. One race has swept across India after another; dynasties have risen and fallen; religions have spread themselves over the land and disappeared. But since the dawn of history, the Brahmin has calmly ruled, swaying the minds and receiving the homage of the people and accepted by foreign nations as the highest type of Indian mankind." Hence the potentialities of the new education will not fail to incline the modern reader with indulgence towards the following exalted appeal which old learning had made to the Brahmin: "I am thy precious gem; preserve me with care: deliver me not to a scorner and so preserved, thou shalt become supremely strong." (Manu II, 114) Cordially accepting the service which he was thought fit to own and discharge, the dutiful Brahmin set himself to the performance of his sacred trust and founded to the best of his opportunities, a glorious system for the collection and diffusion of the highest kind of knowledge.

### STUDENT-STAGE.

Of the four stages to be gone through by every Brahmin in his period of existence, the first which is always binding is 'Brahmacharyam'—student life—for which all ages of civilization and progress are equally and eminently conspicuous. The initiation is inaugurated with elaborate religious ceremonies. All Brahmins close their vedic studies on the first full moon day of the "Uttarayanam" period and commence vedic studies in the "Dakshinayanam" period. This is known as

"Upakarma" which obtains to the present day. This is the vedic College day. The young men, girt with the thread, left their houses and went off with their preceptor to live with him and learn the sacred scriptures, by submitting themselves to a regular course of discipline. This is the residential system of education. The first and the most important lesson impressed on them is the due recognition of the highest place in our nature which reverence most majestically claims to occupy. Every Brahmin student is taught that "by honouring his mother he gains the terrestrial world; by honouring his father, the intermediate or the ethereal world; and by assiduous attention to his preceptor, the celestial world of Brahma (Manu VI 253)" To dismiss the mythological figure, he is taught, above all, that reverence is the highest duty—a lesson of the highest moment and virtue.

### FAMILY FORMULATIONS.

Having learnt the lessons of the Vedas and thus formed a high conception of duty, the Brahmin is naturally prepared to fight out the healthy, breezy battle of life. He enters on the stage of "Grihasthasramam" or married life and settles down as a citizen. All the members of what is known as a natural family, live in a common dwelling, with exclusive privileges and extensive powers liable to the control of the *pater familias* who is bound to maintain them all out of the family property under his control. Every son, when he arrives at a marriageable age, and accepts a suit, puts in his claim to provision for his newly married wife as he does not, like his occidental brother, generally go off and live in a house of his own. Every daughter, when she is given in marriage, stands and insists upon her rights to dowry from the common funds. After her marriage, she becomes subject to the control of the family into which she is married.

The whole family moves at the concert of the chief who keeps all the members under his rule and orders. He is the sole presiding agent of every detail of domestic duties from observance of daily rituals and the distribution of food to the

discussion and solution of weighty problems affecting the weal of the whole family. He gives the finishing stroke on all occasions of note, and his authority is beyond question. He is the benign satrap of his family and looked up to by every member of it with little short of reverence.

### SPIRITUAL SIDE.

After the accomplishment of worldly desires in the above order of life and consequent achievement of self-control and self-discipline, he redeems himself from domestic bondage and passes through the 3rd order of an anchorite in the forest.

Preparing himself thus for the 4th and the last order of "sanniasin" or asceticism, he relinquishes everything worldly and consecrates himself to purely religious musings for the attainment of heaven and happiness. When thus he has relinquished all forms, is intent on his own occupation and free from other desires, when, by devoting himself to God, he has effaced sin, he then attains the supreme path of glory.

### PRESENT PRACTICE.

Such, in brief, is the fourfold basis of complete life according to the conception of the Brahmins. Of these the first and second orders of life appear to wear on their faces unmistakable marks of time-proof durability. The confirmed craving for the growth of human intelligence has placed the working of the first on a vast and gigantic scale and it is being sufficiently encouraged and developed to its full extent by the consecrated energy and enterprise of our Western friends and benefactors. The traditionary principle of the maintenance of the race has fixed the second order also as firm as the first. The distinct maintenance, by the high authority of Vasishtha and Boudhayana, of the optional tenor of the four orders, coupled with precedent and usage, not to speak of the claims and demands of a later age, has resulted in the decay of the last two orders. The proportion of the forest recluse and the ascetic is fast going down, although the spiritual tendency of the Brahmins generally still remains stationary.

The present creed gives every Brahmin the dignity of the unit. He has the glory to take a road of his own. He may live out the life of a student and bring all the forces of his culture to bear upon the extension and amelioration of his people or he may remain to the last a citizen enjoying the sweets of personal and social life or, according as he likes, may retire into proud and pious isolation and work out his spiritual merit.

### NEW BRAHMINS.

Before the Mahomedan conquest, the Brahmins were set apart for high thinking and for the purposes of spiritual ministrations to the other classes of people. Their wants in life were specially met both by the society and the State. After the conquest, the State encouragement of them ceased. They then entered the arena of "struggle for existence" where their superior training told. We cannot possibly have an absolute computation of the degree of their later development of intellect. Examinations afford a fairly good test. Judged then by this relative standard, they have established their intellectual supremacy in a marked way in several departments of knowledge—law, medicine, engineering, literature, science. It cannot be pretended that the uniform preponderance of the Brahmin element is due to any accidental or adventitious circumstance. Apart from the standard of University examinations, the Government has been holding competitive examinations for the Provincial Civil Service and are now holding simultaneous examinations for the Indian Civil Service. In both, they have achieved considerable and creditable success. Of the different classes of population, they have been the first and the foremost to avail themselves of the advantages of Western Education. They never memorialize Government for grant of special privileges to them; nor have they any communal organisation for separate or specific efforts or advocacy. They have shown enterprise and adaptability to changing modes of life. On the bench, at the bar, in the council chamber—everywhere they have displayed intelligence and independence such as to extort the admiration

of European ministers and diplomatists. The Brahmins have still an abiding faith in the power and potency of knowledge and character to raise them to their full heights. They freely recognise that the demand of other classes for fair treatment is quite legitimate and reasonable. Only they feel that the demand of the latter for unfair treatment of the Brahmins can have no trace of legitimacy or reasonableness. They are numerically small, financially poor, communally disliked, officially discouraged and, above all, internally disunited. The main issue with them is to keep well within themselves. Their part or lot in Travancore forms an integral portion of its modern history. In the authoritative words of the State Manual "Travancore owes its high position to the courage, ability, and fidelity of many East coast Brahmins in the past" as, in the main, we may add, it does at present.

Such are some of the leading layers that make up society in this ancient land. The heterogeneous elements that interpose them and compose their different subdivisions are determined on the caste-basis of religion and will therefore be referred to under that head. The non-Hindu section of the people will likewise be dealt with in the sections on Christianity and Mahomedanism.

## B. Religion and Caste.

The principal religions professed by the people are Hinduism, Mahomedanism and Christianity. Buddhism is said to have flourished formerly in the country.

### Hinduism.

#### WHAT IT CONSTITUTES.

Just in the way the mountains and waters are responsible for the vast differences of climate and production, the vast differences in the structure of Hindu Society, characterised by considerable distinctions of caste, culture and creed, are attributable to Hinduism. Nothing is more difficult or less capable of definition than what constitutes a Hindu.

or Hinduism. If this is so even to a Hindu, it is excusable in European writers who, baffled by their attempts at definition, have, in their despair, declared there is no such thing as Hinduism. Sir John Strachey carries the idea farther and says there is no such thing as India whose regions include a multitude of different countries and yet these congeries of countries have a fundamental unity at their bottom making for a common country and a common people. Even so, is Hinduism—a system including a multitude of castes and culture and claiming a common universal basis. The first form of Hinduism was of course Vedism. Then followed Brahminism which introduced the ideal of the universal spirit that permeates everything. Everything is its manifestation. This ideal became a potent factor in the evolution of Hindu Society. Its influence palpably coursed through the entire extent of the land. In the words of Mr. Romesh Chander Dutt, it moved round in a series of concentric ripples on the placid surface of society, expanding from the inmost circle of the Brahmins and gradually dying away to the farthest extent. The different classes of the society thus live as though in the life of the Brahmins. Hence Hinduism is rightly regarded as being synonymous with Brahminism and it means and includes not merely all the articles of the faith of the ideal Brahmin but also of every degree of approach towards or divergence from this ideal.

### ITS IDEALS.

It stands for universal unity. Its object is to secure evolutionary efficiency. It has been truly said that, to the Hindu mind, all genius or inspiration is the perception of unity and that the mathematics of Euclid or the sculpture of Michael Angelo would be as authentic an expression of the religious consciousness as the saint-hood of Francis. The first and the most essential fact about Hinduism is that it is an immense synthesis; the elements of which are derived from different directions and welded into a comprehensive whole. It holds together on the social side all different sects and tribes and is an incorporation of their beliefs and traditions on the religious

side. It never drove away nor exterminated the conquered race. Never averse to a new idea, no matter what its origin is, Hinduism has never failed to put each on its trial and let it have its chance. It never knew of the burning of a Bruno or the torture of a Galileo or the baiting of Jews or the stoning of Quakers, the ducking of Methodists, the murdering of Mormons or the massacre of the Armanians—all so illustrative not only of religious intolerance but also racial hatred. It has been constructive and synthetic from the earliest days to the present time. There has always been room for new races with new ideals and customs to settle down in its interstices. It is both a living and an ideal system. The ideal depicted did not of course actually exist at one time all over India. It marks the different phases of the past conserved in a collected form. As a living factor, it permeates everywhere the life of the people and makes for vivid consciousness of their unity.

### THREE-FOLD FUNCTION.

In Travancore, the work of Hinduism is *threefold*. Its *religio-social* influence has given rise to the caste-organization of the people. The purely *religious* aspect of it deals with the maintenance of the State Church and attempts to solve the problem of death and afterwards. Under its *socio-religious* aspect, it has organised a system of charity, private, state-aided as well as state-assumed and has so far successfully grappled with the problem of the poor—a problem which at all times, in all societies and under all Governments, is a source of considerable trouble and trial to the State. We shall afterwards have occasion to notice this portion of the subject in connection with State Religion and State help. We would therefore turn to

#### a. Caste-organization.

The peculiarity of Hinduism is to absorb into itself that with which it comes into contact. Such absorption on the social side is the basis of caste-organization. This system was not the growth of a single age or even of a few centuries



As observed by Wilson in his work on "Indian Castes", pride of ancestry, of family and personal position and occupation and of religious pre-eminence is the ground-characteristic of caste and it is not peculiar to India. Nations and peoples, as well as individuals have in all countries, in all ages and at all times been prone to take exaggerated views of their own importance and to claim for themselves a natural and historical and social superiority to which they had no adequate title. In India it was a large sentiment developed by a powerful race. Though it was introduced in Southern India and Travancore as a result of Aryan colonization, the fundamental fact is that it belongs as much to the Dravidian as the Aryan races. The latter had their guild institutions upon which Hinduism engrafted its ideal of universalism. This was the reason why caste distinctions are more numerous here than in other parts of India and are carried to an extraordinary extent.

We have in Travancore 1,000 sub-divisions of castes, which may be grouped under 72 principal divisions—8 of Brahmins, 2 of Nanajatis, 12 of Antaralajatis, 18 of Sudras, 6 of Artisans, 10 of Patitajatis, 8 of Nichajatis, and 8 of extra *jatis* or groups. It is not intended to encumber this portion by enumeration of these different exhibits of the old-world or with any explanation of their exclusive traits. A few of the divisions and sub-divisions of the people have already been incidentally referred to in the preceding pages; others of them of merely historical importance and present-day bearing will be named, so as to give the reader a general idea of the excessive complexity of the system and the principles and classification on which it is based.

### BRAHMIN CASTE-GROUPS.

As observed in a previous portion, the Brahmins of Travancore come under two classes:—the Dravida Brahmins and the Malabar Brahmins. The Dravida Brahmins are divided into five classes. The Tamil Brahmins alone strictly belong to the Dravida group. They comprehend the *Smartas* who follow the teachings of Sankaracharya; the

*Vira Vaishnavas* who are followers of Madwacharya; the *Sri Vaishnavas* whose religious leader was Ramanuja; the *Bhagavathas* who with equal favour look upon the worship of both Siva as well as Vishnu; and the *Saktas* who worship *sakti*. Turning to another principle of classification, the Tamil Brahmins are divided into the *Vadamas*, or the north country Brahmins; the *Madhyamas* or the middle country Brahmins; the *Sankethas* or those who in ancient times formed a miscellaneous clique of their own and so on. Dr. Hunter says that the Dravidians have been settled in organised masses from the dawn of history down to the present day and the present Revenue system of India is still founded on the old Dravidian Revenue system which grew up thousands of years ago.

The Mahrattas form the next group of the Dravidian Brahmins who have come from the country of the Mahrathi language and who have played a prominent part in the Political history of Travancore. When H. H. the present Maharajah was presented with an address by the Members of the Madras Mahratta Association early in December 1888, he eloquently remarked in warm appreciation of their services:—"Your kindly regard for the ancient principality which men of your nationality have naturally helped to make what it is, has again manifested itself by the cordial welcome you have given me on the happy occasion of my present visit to the city." They are divided into several sub-castes such as the *Desastas* who count among them the greatest of the Marathi bards; the *Konkarnasthas* or the *chit paranas* to whose order belong the famous *Perbhwas*; the *karkhadars* who are said to have been made by providential Parasurama and who have produced the great Marathi poet Moropant; the *Kannars* who represent the "first Sakha of the white Yajur Veda" and are numerous in Kolapur; the *Mudhyandinas* to whose community belong the family priests of the Raja of Kolapur; the *Podpas* who are teachers of the tribes found in the highland above Konkan; the *Patashas* who are priests, physicians, and astrologers; the *Kirrantas* who are cultivators said "to have sprung from twelve Rishis"; the *Tiguds*

whose occupation is to plant the *piper-bettle*; the *Javalas* who perform menial services connected with the house-hold of Brahmins; the *abhiras* who "act as priests, herdsmen and cultivators"; and others, too numerous to mention.

Thirdly, there are the Andhras, or Telugu Brahmins, who speak a sweet language known as the Italian of the East. Referring to the sweetness of their language, Dr. Wilson quotes a verse which runs as follows;—"The Marathi is sand; the Turuku (Hindi) is dust: the Kanadi is musk; the Tenugu (Telugu) is honey; the Oda (Odra) is strength."

The Telugus are cut up into numerous castes. The *Vaduasalus* and the *Kamamkulus* belong to the Rig Vedic group. The *Murakanidus*, the *Nyogis* and the *Madhyandinas* profess the Yajur Veda. The *Madwacharyas* and the *Ramanujas* follow the teaching of their respective religious leaders.

There are again, the Karnataka Brahmins who have their own sub-divisions, and the Konkani Brahmins who, as a result of the persecution of the then Government of Goa migrated to the whole coast extending from Goa down to Cape Comorin.

There are eight classes of Malabar Brahmins to whom reference has already been made elsewhere. The offsprings of Namburi Brahmins by Kshatriya women since the extirpation of all the male members of the Kshatriya community, are known as Koil Tampurans. Tippu's persecution in Malabar drove them south for permanent settlement in Cochin and Travancore. Since they are allied to the Royal House, we shall have to advert to them again under that head.

Of the varieties of the Brahmin Tamils, the Mukkanee Brahmins who wear the tuft in front and not the back of the head, and who worship *Skanda* or *Subrahmonya*, their special class-deity representing a phase of Dravidianised *Saivism*, are an instance in point of Dravidian interfusion. In Travancore, they were invited by the rulers and even invested with the *local knighthood* confined to Nairs and associated with the addition of *Sthanakanaku* to their names. Witness the

ancient batch of Mukkanis who responded to the Royal invitation and settled first in Vembannur, their chief habitat.

Besides those already mentioned, there are several intermediate classes.

### PRINCIPLE OF INTERFUSION.

All the Pancha Dravida communities have contributed to the caste-organisation—each allowing the ancient divisions to shade off into the new-formed orders. The varieties of these new orders form and furnish the nexus of intermediate castes which interlink the old and the new ones. The Namburis, with their graded groups of Ampalavasis (such as Moothathu, Adikal, Chakyar, Nambiar, Unni, Pisharadi, Varier, Puduval &c.) intermediate between them and Kshatriyas, represent a condition of compromise with the Aryan Brahmins. The Koil Tampurans, with their graded groups of Samanthas (such as Adioti, Unniathiri, Pandalal, Eradi, Valloti, Nedungadi, &c.) intermediate between them and the Nairs, represent a condition of compromise with the Aryan Kshatriyas. The Nairs, with their graded groups (such as Kiriam, Ilom, Swarupom &c.) intermediate between them and the lower layers, represent a condition of compromise with the East Coast Tamils, in that there is historical evidence of their Dravidian affinity to the 64 families of Vellalas whom Dr. Oppert, in his "Early Inhabitants of India", identifies with the Pallavas. Even the lowest layer has a lower yet to look upon, tied by the tendon of social intermediates.

### NON-BRAHMIN TAMILS.

The non-Brahmin Tamils with groups (such as Vellalars, Karayalars, Yadavars, Maravas, Mudaliars, Sourashtras Krishnan Vakakars, Chettiyars, Naidus, Reddies &c.) represent a compromise of which the Nanjanad Vellalas are a typical specimen.

They are an amalgam and retain the combined characteristics of Pandya Vellalas and Malabar Nairs. The latter

of Tovalai and Agasteesvaram which constitute the region of Nanjinad are their chief habitat. The Travancore Vellalas are immigrants from Tinnevely and Madura, as the Cochin Vellalas are from Coimbatore and Salem. To Travancore they appear to have been invited, in ancient times on account of their skill in accounts: and till quite recently, before the introduction of the British system of accounts in the State, the post of *Valia Melezhuthu* or Accountant—General used to be held invariably by one of their class. Even today, when they come to the capital on business of State, custom demands the disbursement of an allowance of Rs. 20 from the Palace Treasury. In former times, they were consulted often on the affairs of Government, as borne out by the evidence of *Neets* or Royal Commissions. One of these *Neets* dated 1805 concludes thus:—"As We have to consider this matter in conference with you, you are all required to start immediately, on seeing this and be here without delay."

The special claim which the Nanjinad Vellalas have to such high estimation was established by the special services rendered by them to the Travancore Kings in the arbitration of the dispute between the Travancore and the Pandyan rulers as to the sovereignty of Nanjinad. The King of Pandya based his contention on the circumstance that the inhabitants were *Makkathayis*, or followers of the patriarchal law of succession, while the Travancore subjects were admittedly *Marumakkathayis*, or followers of the matriarchal law of inheritance. Faithful and loyal to Travancore, the Nanjinad Vellalas swore to their having become Travancore subjects and adopted the Travancore law of Nepotism. Their solemn statement which they made before the Madura temple, settled the matter of sovereignty in favour of Travancore. It was on this account that the social law of the Nanjinad Vellalas came to be a combination of patriarchal and matriarchal systems. It was more in the nature of a compromise which has entitled the son and the widow of a deceased person to a portion of the property, self-acquired and ancestral, determined by the rights of *Ukantuduma* (inheritance or right by love) and *Nankuduma* (property of woman). Though

the whole class has taken to Marumakkathayom, there are still Nanjinad Vellalas who stick to the old system of Makkathayom. Intermarriages between the two classes have become a recognised practice. They absorbed and assimilated some of the customs of the Nairs. The men, for instance, began to wear the tuft of hair in front, while the women took to white cloths, like Nair women. These differentiate the men, on the other side, who wear tuft on the back and the women who wear only coloured cloth while their husbands are alive. The Pandya Saivas who stick to the custom of the old country keep aloof from them and continue to undergo all the formal ceremonies prescribed by the Hindu Law.

In the wake of the new consciousness that has come over the country, there has been a persistent demand on the part of the Nanjinad Vellalas to alter their social law. Accordingly, a Committee was created to enquire into their customs as regards divorce, partition, adoption, the rights of *Ukantuduma* and *Nankuduma*, the powers of the Karanavan, and testamentary and intestate succession. The draft Bill embodying the recommendations of the Committee is before the Legislative Council.

Such are some of the several layers of which society in Travancore is constituted on the caste-basis of Hinduism.

#### PAST SERVICE OF CASTE. .

These social segregations have been found as the common attribute of humanity in all ages and in all countries. Only there was no such sharp distinction in former days. The fact is indisputable that when caste is diminished in one direction, it is increased in another. Hence it is that the French missionary Abbe Dubois than whom no European is better acquainted with the manners and customs of this country says:—"I consider the institution of castes among the Hindu nations as the happiest effort of their legislation; and I am well convinced that if the people of India never sank into a state of barbarism, and if when almost all Europe was plunged in that dreary gulf, India kept up her head,

preserved and extended the sciences, the arts and civilization; it is wholly to the distinction of castes that she is indebted for that high celebrity."

Sir Henry Cotton considers that it is the existing basis of social order. No doubt, as observed by Sir W. W. Hunter, there is plasticity as well as rigidity in caste—the one enabling caste to adapt itself to widely separated stages of social progress and to incorporate the various ethnical elements, and the other giving strength and permanence to the corporate body thus formed.

Monsieur De La Mazeliere appreciatingly observes: "Hinduism protects the lowest as well as the highest castes; it protects them politically in checking the tyranny of kings; it protects them socially in giving the lowest a society of equals; it protects them economically in securing to each one the monopoly of its trade against the pretensions of all the other castes, even of Brahmins and of kings." Sister Nivedita feelingly exclaims, therefore: "Caste is race-continuity; it is the historic sense; it is the dignity of tradition and of purpose for the future."

Mr. W. S. Lilly remarks:—"No doubt all members of the human race are equal as persons but, with this equality, co-exist vast inequalities arising from the degree of personality and the conditions in which it exists." Dr. Lorimer, in supporting a similar position, asserts in his excellent work on "Studies in Social Life":—"We cannot entirely destroy social inequalities even if we would. Their real foundation is not property, but humanity. To abrogate them, we must abrogate man and that is plainly impossible". We strongly deprecate therefore the uncharitable spirit not infrequently displayed by critics whose comments tend to widen the gulf already existing between class and class. We are not oblivious to the evils of the system but what we contend is that the eradication of such social barriers is a grand work of *compromise and conciliation*.

#### ITS PRESENT PLIGHT.

Whatever the strength of the caste-system or its service in the past be, we cannot shut our eyes to its present pitiable

plight. Forces and factors there are now at work, which it is not wisdom to ignore. The disruptive factors are the fruits of education, the course of which the spirit of western civilisation has so long and so much influenced. All the different classes have had alike the benefit of this education. They realize their capacity; take stock of their position; compare their claims to equality of civic rights. Impelled by this new influence, there is everywhere a cry for, and more or less, a recognition of equality of opportunity. In this matter, redemption has largely to come from within, with respect to each group. Nothing can be more disastrous than to extinguish equality of opportunity to one class who has it, in trying to extend it to classes who have it not. This is an essential condition which alone can guarantee inter-racial and inter-caste harmony.

## (b) Religious Confederacy.

### ITS STRENGTH.

The basic spirit and ideals of Hinduism have been already explained. Hinduism, as observed before, is a religious confederacy. It represents the coalition of the Vedic Brahmins with the ruder rites of the lower castes and tribes. It is a religious federation based on worship. As the race elements have been moulded into castes, so the old beliefs and religious elements have been worked up into gods.

Hence we find the pagodas in the country divided into two classes, those dedicated to superior Divinity and those dedicated to inferior Divinity. There are 6159 pagodas of the former kind and 3205 of the latter out of a total of 9364. The higher castes of the Hindus worship the higher Divinity. Of the temples, some are under Government management, while the rest belong to corporations, called Ooranmakars. These are of 4 classes; ancient temples said to have been founded by Parajurama; temples founded by Rajas; temples founded by communities or leading individuals; temples founded by sanyasins or ascetics. The Travancore temples are known for their antiquity, for their religious sanctity,



for the excellent scenery of their sites and for their architectural beauty. It is unnecessary and cumbersome to give a detailed description of the daily service, festivals &c., in Hindu temples. The Hindus, like other nations, worshipped first as they feared, then as they admired and finally as they reasoned. Their earliest Vedic Gods were the stupendous phenomena of the visible world. The deities became divine heroes in the epic poems and legends and they were spiritualised into abstractions by the philosophical school.

### ITS POPULARIZATION.

The world-renowned Sankaracharya (himself born in Travancore) has moulded the later philosophy into its final form and popularized it as a national religion. In the words of a great native scholar of Indian as well as European History, "from land's end to land's end, he traversed the continent; wherever there was an opponent, he was ready to meet him in argument, he—the Aristotle of his age—brought all the forces of his masterly dialectics to bear on the subject, over-throwing all opposition and converting all to the cause of God and of Holy Writ." He addressed himself to the high caste philosophers on the one hand and to the low caste multitude on the other. He has left behind him, as a two-fold result of his life-work, (1) a compact Hindu sect and (2) a popular religion. Siva-worship, he introduced as a link between the highest and the lowest castes.

The excessive intellectual system of Sankara's Monism gave rise to the Vaisnavite schools of Ramanuja and Madhavacharya, which laid emphasis on the Personal aspect of God. These led to the revival of popular Hinduism. It was completed by the Tamil saints—Gnanasambander and Appar who re-introduced *Saivism* in the South. This reformed Hinduism, when it came into contact with Mussalman rule and religion, again burst and brought forth numerous Bhagavat reformers—Kabir, Nanak, Chaitanya, Vallaba Ramdos and Dadu, all of whom emphasised the path of Bhakthi or devotion as the only path for salvation; Hinduism under the new influence of Western civilisation is again at

work through the Brahma Samaj, the Arya Samaj, the Theosophical movement, the Ramakrishna mission and the General Hindu Revival movements.

### ITS UNIVERSALITY.

Vishnu-worship supplies a religion for the intermediate classes. *Siva-worship combines the Brahminical doctrine of personal god with the Buddhistic principle of spiritual equality of man.* These worships furnish a religious bond among the Hindus, in the same way as caste supplies a social federation among them. Take away these; the fundamental basis of Hindu national unity is gone and with it, the basis of the larger humanity into which it merges. In the words of the late Sir Monier Monier-Williams, "it is a remarkable characteristic of Hinduism that it neither requires nor attempts to make converts, nor is it by any means at present driven off the field, as might be expected, by being brought into contact with two such proselytising religions as Mahomedanism and Christianity. Another characteristic of Hinduism is that it is all receptive, all comprehensive. It claims to be the one religion of humanity, of human nature, of the whole world. Hinduism has something to offer which is suited to all minds. Its very strength lies in its infinite adaptability to the infinite diversity of human characters and human tendencies. It has its highly spiritual and abstract side suited to the philosophical Brahmins; its practical and concrete side suited to the man of affairs and the man of the world; its æsthetic and ceremonial side suited to the man of æsthetic feeling and imagination; its quiescent and contemplative side suited to the man of peace and lover of seclusion. Nay, it holds out the right hands of brotherhood to fetish-worshippers, animal-worshippers and tree-worshippers."

The eternal verities embodied in the Vedas shade off into the Sastras. The Sastras furnish the nexus of the intermediate stages which interlink Vedism with modern Hinduism. The *Strutis* or the graded Sastras, suitable to the *Śūdras* Age; the *Smritis* or the graded Sastras suitable to

the Dwapara Age; and the Tantra Eclectics or the graded Sastras suitable to the Kali or the present Age, preserve and present an exposition of the cardinal truths in a serial system of spiritual culture, suited to the nature and capacity of every individual or groups of individuals. Hence Hinduism is a religious confederacy running in parallel lines with the Hindu Social Organization, to meet the varying temperaments and tendencies of the people who live in it. It provides methods of spiritual self-culture to all. It is cultural, not credal; cosmopolitan, not sectarian or communal. It is a spiritual series from heart to God—from animism to Adwaitism, from individual soul to the Over-soul.

### Budhistic and Jaina Relics.

In its conflict with Hinduism, Buddhism offers to the student of history a very complex but instructive problem. Synchronous with the caste-organisation of the country and the growth of the power and influence of the Brahmins, Buddhist and Jain missionaries spread over this coast. Mr. Logan thinks that the flight of the first Brahmin immigrants from the country, *for fear of serpents*, contains a reference to the Jaina immigrants whose symbol was a hooded snake. But he is in error when he conjectures that the Perumals were originally of Jaina persuasion. We find that the Perumal invited six Brahmin apostles to meet the Jainas in argument and to over-throw their influence and power. Bhattacharaya, Bhattagopala and Bhattanarayana were the apostles and they brought all the forces of their dialectics to bear upon the subject and converted all to the cause of the Hindu Triad. *Sasthrakali* or a species of worship peculiar to this country is the sole product of their triumphant compromise. The object of the worship is to seek protection from the attacks of the snakes. The Deity worshipped is *Sastha*, the Divine offspring of Vishnu and Siva. There were originally eighteen congregations set apart for the worship. A lamp is lit up and four Numburi Brahmins are seated round. They tell *Mantras* in praise of the Deity. This is followed by songs, some of which are withering pieces of

satire directed towards the aggressive faith. Here is the substance of one of the songs:—"Can an elephant be killed by bugs? Can the mountains find wings to fly with? Can two rats plough the wide expanse of the world-encircling ocean? Then can Hinduisim be supplanted."

The Brahmin apostles settled down permanently in the country. The Perumal honoured them with large *Kizipresents* and made endowments of lands measuring to the extent of 5,000 *Kulan* seed-capacity. Their sandals were also preserved as a mark of honour. Despite the iconoclastic work of the Brahmins to re-instate Hindu gods in the Budhistic temples, there are still relics of their being originally places of Budhistic worship. The temple at Chitral in South Travancore is one of the several instances in point. It was formerly a Budhistic temple. The idols that we see both in and about the temple prominently suggest Budhistic sculpture. When the religion of Gautama passed from its high meridian glory in India and hastened towards dissolution, this shrine appears to have been converted into a place of Hindu worship. With reference to this temple, H. H. the late Maha Rajah emphatically wrote:—"The Brahmins have appropriated and adapted to their purposes, this Budhistic temple." Thus it was, in the words of Logan, that "Vedic Brahmanism is believed to have finally supplanted Jainism."

The rock-cut temple at Madavooparai, the stone-effigy of Karumadi Kuttan on the canal ridge at Karumadi, the temple at Thirunandikarai, said to have been built by Nandi Varman, and the Nagercoil Shrine, sacred to the Serpent-God, are other relics of the sway of Buddhism and Jainism, both of which soared cloud-like into the sky, only to descend and dissolve into the wide waters of Hinduism.

## Mahomedanism.

### SECTS.

The Mahomedans in this country are mostly converts from Hindus. They seldom furnish converts to the Christian faith. They are found in all Taluqs. They number over two

and a half lacs. They are a strong and hardy race. They are divided into several classes. Their chief sub-divisions are (1) Sunnis and (2) Shias. The former is again cut up into Hanifée, Shafée, Malikée and Hambali. The latter consists of six groups. Each of these groups is sub-divided into twelve classes. Each of the two main classes regards the other as wanderers from the Truth. As observed by Sir Monier Williams: "The Moslems of India became partially Hinduised, and in language, habits and character, they took from the Hindus more than they imparted. Hence it happens that the lower orders of the Mahomedans observe distinctions of caste as strictly as the Hindus." Many of them will eat and drink together but not intermarry.

### CREED.

The Koran is their sacred scripture. Mahomet is their prophet. Their slogan is "Allah ho Akbar" (God is great). Praising God as Lord of the worlds (not only of this world of ours) it attributes to Him mercy and clemency, with supreme power over the Day of Judgment—an avowal of worship and service. It has one authorized version of the Koran. It is a teetotal creed—the only creed that insists on total abstinence. This has much influenced the prohibition-movement of the day. There are about 500 mosques in Travancore. The priests are called *Thangals*. There are fifty-four mosques in Trivandrum. This represents the highest number. Next comes Kalculam, the former capital of the country. Even in the essentially Christian centre of Kottayam, there is one mosque.

### HISTORY.

The history of Mahomedanism is easily stated. Tradition ascribes its origin to a writ obtained by Shaik-ibn-Dinar, and his family set out for Malabar bearing the Perumal's letters. They delivered the letters to whom they were addressed. They obtained ready acceptance and recognition at the hands of the chiefs whose territories they visited. The Cranganore chief was the first prince they visited. They were received hospitably and given lands to build mosques

on. Malik-ibn-Dinar became the first *Kazi* of the place. At his instance, Malik-ibn-Habib with his wife and children came to Travancore. The MahaRajah received them hospitably and gave also lands to build mosques on. The second great mosque was founded there by Hussain, one of the sons of Malik-ibn-Habib, who became its *Kazi*. The last of the famous Malabar mosques was constructed at Quilon. All this took place about the first half of the twelfth century which was an important era in the history of the Malabar coast.

The feelings between the adherents of the different sects among Mahomedans are ever rancorous and, in this respect, they are worse than the Hindus among whom caste distinctions, whatever may be the reason, do not breed such bigoted hatred or class antipathy. The Mahomedans as usual are backward in education. Ignorance is their curse, as bigotry is their weakness. Every special encouragement is being held out by Government to pull them out of their backwardness in all respects.

### Christianity.

It is an interesting feature that Travancore has a larger Christian population than any other Indian State, over 25 p. c. of the people of the State being Christians. The proportion of Christians to other opulation is twenty-nine times that of British India—an unmistakable proof of the wisdom and tolerance of the Maha Rajahs of this State from very early times. The history of Christian Missions in Travancore may be traced under two broad divisions namely, Syrian Mission (comprehending Catholic Mission) and Protestant Mission (including Church Mission and London Mission).

#### SYRIAN MISSION.

The earliest Christian Mission is ascribed by tradition to the advent of St. Thomas, the Apostle, in the first century of the Christian era. It will be seen therefore that the history of Christianity in this country is a history of over 1800 years. St. Thomas worked well. He made numerous converts and

built several Churches. But on his death there was a great relaxation. The enthusiasm for the new creed became so much cooled down that, after the lapse of two centuries, there were only eight families of Christians. However, there arrived in 345 A. D., a large colony of Christians from Bagdad, Nineva, Jerusalem and other places, under the guidance of Thoma Cana, a merchant who was then trading in the Malabar Coast. They were largely patronised by the early kings of Malabar. With their advent and under their influence, the Syrians increased in number and power. Chaldean Bishops also came from Babylon, off and on. These Bishops governed the Churches until the arrival of the Portuguese in 1498 A. D.

When the Portuguese Government grew in power, they began to bring the Syrians under the sway of the Portuguese prelates. In 1581 a College appears to have been opened at Vaipicotta where they settled, to impart instruction in priesthood to the local Syrians. Mr. Mackenzie says in his work on *Christianity in Travancore* that "in 1583 when Father Alex. Valignano returned from Japan, he found awaiting him his appointment as Provincial of the Jesuits and he at once set to work on the systematic instruction of the Thomas Christians." The Syrian Bishop at this time was Mar Joseph. He was suspected of Nestorian heresy and, in consequence, was arrested and sent to Portugal and afterwards to Rome where "his piety and erudition had aroused a feeling in his favour." But he died there. In the mean time, at the request of the Syrians, the Nestorian patriarch of Babylon sent Mar Abraham appointing him to be the Archbishop of Angamali. He was arrested by the Portuguese and detained in the Dominican convent. But he escaped and came to Babylon where the Patriarch re-conferred on him the title of the Bishop of Malabar. He then proceeded to Rome and appealed to the Pope. The Pope confirmed him in his appointment.

Supported thus by the Portuguese authorities as well as the Pope, Mar Abraham came. He held a Synod in 1583 at which he made a profession of the Catholic faith, and the

Syrian missal was amended. The Nestorian Patriarch of Babylon questioned the conduct of Mar Abraham whose explanation only aggravated his offence. In 1592 he was excommunicated by the Council of Goa which he refused to attend. In 1595 Pope Clement VIII dispatched to Menezes, the Archbishop of Goa, a brief to enquire into the faith of Mar Abraham and of his followers. The synod of Diamper was held in 1599 at which the faith of the Syrians was enunciated. The union of the churches continued from 1596 to 1653.

When the power of the Portuguese fell, the Papal power was disowned. A division took place among the Syrians. Some rejected the power of the Portuguese prelates and declared themselves independent. They formed a new sect, hence known as *Puthen Kuttukars*, while those who remained steadfast to Rome were called *Pazayakuttukars* and they continued to remain under the European ecclesiasts. The seceded Syrians wrote to several Patriarchs in Asia to send a rightly consecrated Syrian Bishop. A Jacobite Bishop, Gregory, came and re-consecrated Mar Thomas I and henceforth a long succession of native *Metrans* governed the *Puthencoor* Syrians.

With the commencement of the Dutch power in India, new dissensions arose. But, as remarked by Mr. Mackenzie, "they seemed to have concerned themselves little about the Christians except from political reasons."

The year 1806 is rendered memorable by the visit of Dr. Cladius Buchanan. He saw Colonel Macaulay, the British Resident in Travancore, and with him visited the northern parts of the country. At Ankamale, he was presented with a copy of the old Syriac Bible which was in the possession of the Syrians for over 1000 years. It was taken to England and published there. The year 1816 opened a fresh chapter. It begins with the consecration of Mar Dionysius III. Col. Munro was the Resident at the time. He undertook to get out Missionaries from Europe. The Church Mission entered into friendly relation with the Syrians. Of the Church Mission itself, we



shall speak later on. This relation did not last long. The last portion of the history of the Syrian Church discloses how, under Mar Dionysius IV, it severed its connection with the Anglican Missionaries; how a special commission sat to adjudicate the claims on the endowments of the Kottayam Seminary; how both the parties languished under ten years of litigation; and how, in the end, Mar Dionysius obtained a decree in his favour. Mar Dionysius, the head of the non-reforming party, and Mar Thoma, the head of the reforming party, have between them the whole of the Travancore Churches, save the Romo-Syrian and the Latin Catholic.

### CHURCH MISSION.

We have already remarked that the Church Mission was brought here by Col. Munro. He undertook to get out missionaries to train Syrian deacons to carry on parochial schools. Mr. Thomas Norton arrived in 1816 and he was followed by Mr. Bailey, in November of that year. Then came Messrs. Baker and Fenn. Mr. Fenn was put in charge of the Seminary. H. H's. Government endowed the institution with Rs. 20,000 and a large estate at Kallada called "Munro Island." Over and above this, the State also helped Mr. Bailey, in the translation and distribution of the Bible, with another gift of Rs. 8,000. Col. Munro got the Honourable East India Company to invest 3,000 Star pagodas, in the name of the community, for educational purposes. Col. Munro was the most earnest promoter of the Syrian Christian interests. There is an illustrious roll of Missionaries who have laboured in this mission. It has several remarkable educational institutions and its principal station is Kottayam.

### LONDON MISSION.

This owed its early work in Travancore to the efforts of its first convert, Veda Manikam. At his instance, Rev. Tobias Willam Ringletaube came from Tranquebar in 1806, and built at Myladi a Church in 1809 with the courteous consent of H. H. Lekshmi Rani. The construction of the Church was commanded to be supervised by Tahsildar Munnen Annavi. The benevolent Rani endowed the Church with 100 acres of paddy land, of which the revenue is now devoted

to the support of the Nagercoil Mission College. Rev. Ringeltaube was succeeded by Mr. Mead who came in 1816. H. H. the Rani was pleased to place at his disposal a Sircar building with extensive premises and to make a grant of Rs. 5,000 to enable him to buy more lands for Mission purpose. The tax on the paddy lands was also reduced. These concessions are in keeping with the tolerance and magnanimity characteristic of the Royal House of Travancore, so evident from the following pregnant utterance of H. H. the Maha Rajah :—"The aid given to the Schools and other institutions established by the good Missionaries who labour so disinterestedly is no more than the assistance they have a right to expect, who help us so materially in promoting the intellectual and moral advancement of our people." Mr. Mead was joined by Mr. Knill and other Missionaries. In 1819 Mr. Knill laid the foundation of the Nagercoil chapel. The London Mission Society has stations at (1) Nagercoil where Mission work began in 1818; (2) Neyyoor, where Mission work commenced in 1827; (3) Parasala, where Mission work was started in 1845; (4) Trivandrum, where it was set on foot in 1837; and (5) Quilon, where it was organized in 1821.

Besides these, there are the Salvation Army Mission; the Lutheran Mission; the Brethren Mission; the Church of England Zenana Mission; and several others.

Moral training, education, and charitable works are alone the enduring features of the Mission labour. And conscientious Missionaries afield who know this, concentrate their efforts on Schools, Hospitals and relief works—all based on friendly relations.

### SECTS AND SCHISMS.

In all, Christianity holds, according to the latest census, 30% of the people of the State and bears a proportion of 25% to the total Christian population of India. There are 20 sects and 185 sub-sects. The Census Commissioner adds that two new sects—Ayyanavar Christians and Sambavur Christians—have come into existence and observes that these are *couverts*

from Ayyanavar and Sambavur Hindus and call themselves so to distinguish them from converts from other castes and religions.

The Syrian Christians who differ from Indian Christians in habits, modes of life, dress—everything, constitute a separate community. But they too have been distracted by party dissensions. Sir M. E. Grant Duff who regarded them as the advance-post of the Great Eastern Church referred to their internal schisms thus:—"If I take an interest in you as a whole, I also take an interest in your leading divisions. Some of you desire to have a national Church of Malabar. In such a desire, an Englishman, whose Church is essentially political and parliamentary, cannot help sympathizing. Others again of you are faithful to Antioch, the scene of the first council which decided, one may fairly say, whether Christianity was to be a Jewish sect or a world-wide religion. Another of your division holds, I am told, with Babylon, and carries back our minds to a still more venerable and hoary antiquity, while a still larger section forms an integral, though in some respects, a segregated and peculiar portion of that mighty communion which a great and essentially Protestant historian has compared to the dome of Brunelleschi rising over Florence".

There are three distinct parties—the non-reform party, the reform party, and the party of converts drawn from both. The internecine quarrels and dissensions still continue more or less to disturb communal harmony. To sink such religious and party differences, once and for all, is a vital question the solution of which now is one which those who watch their new movement and care for their advancement, could ill afford to under-rate. Despite such divisions and dissensions within, the community as a whole has made and is making the most of its opportunity. Whatever there remained of restrictions which tradition and past usage had imposed on equality of opportunity has been removed. Education and enterprise, characteristic of the community, push it on fast and far to the front.

We have now surveyed the several religious creeds and social castes in this ancient land of an ancient people. Lord

Curzon is perfectly right when he observes:—"In one respect His Highness enjoys a peculiar position of responsibility, for he is the Ruler of a community that is stamped by wide racial differences and represents a curious motley of religions." The continuous prevalence of its peace and prosperity is an unerring proof of the Maharajah's enlightened policy to deal equal justice to all the classes including the humblest.

### C. Language and Literature.

#### ORIGIN OF MALAYALAM.

An ethnological account of the people should not lose sight of their language and literature. Malayalam is the language of the people. This is better localised than any of the languages of South India. It is spoken in the South of Kanara, throughout Malabar, in Cochin, and in Travancore. It is spoken hardly at all elsewhere. The Malayalam-speaking population amounts in all to ninety millions in the Madras Presidency, including the Indian States of Travancore and Cochin. Those who speak it are chiefly Hindus. It is also spoken by the Jews, Mahomedans and Christians. The language is peculiarly related to Tamil. Some scholars think that it is an off-shoot of Tamil; others ascribe to it a Sanskrit origin. There is yet another school of opinion which holds that, like Tamil, it is an off-shoot from the original parent-stock of Dravidian languages. However it be, there is no doubt about its inherent affinity to both Tamil as well as Sanskrit. Its idioms bear a close affinity to Tamil. It was Ezhuthatchan who naturalised the *grantha* character in Malayalam. Before that, the Dravidian *Vattezhuthu* was the common script. This is the deliberate opinion of Dr. Burnell after a careful examination of several South Indian inscriptions. Though its foundation is deep-rooted in Tamil, its super-structure abounds in rich and elegant Sanskrit expressions. It was this latter circumstance that induced the talented author of "Kerala Kaumudi" (Mr Kovunni Nedungadi) to hold that Sanskrit is the Himalayas from which the Ganges of the Malayalam literature has descended and that Tamil is the Jumna, tributary thereto. The fact is that, in its relation to Malayalam, Tamil is

the language really answering to the Himalayas. This vital fact should not be lost sight of, though the copious current of the Sanskrit tributary is powerful enough to change the course and color of the Malayalam speech. This, even a philologist, like the late Mr. A. R. Raja Raja Varma, who was under the sway and spell of Sanskrit, and whose "Panineeyam" still has influence over the Malayalam language, has candidly confessed in his last edition of the work.

Though the language of the early settlers and invaders was decidedly Tamil, the natural barriers of the intervening mountains shut them out from contact with the Dravidians on the other side of the Ghats. Fresh colonies of Brahmins poured forth from the north. By a process of ethnic syncretism, a new race of Keraleans, speaking an altered Dravidian dialect, came into existence. The history of languages shows that such separation and emigration happening in any community work out considerable change in the language according to the influence of the environments at large. The best example is furnished by the history of the English language. Till the 11th century A. D., the Saxons governed England. It was then invaded by Normans who subjugated the country. The Norman invaders separated from their original home in Normandy, freely mixed and mingled with the Saxons and from such commingling sprang the English language of to-day. The difference between the English language at the time of Alfred (9th century A. D.) and the English soon after the Norman conquest is as great as that of the language of the copper-plate-grant by Cheraman Perumal (100 A. D.) and that of Ezhuthatchan 700 years after. The modern Malayalam sprang from the Tamil of Cheraman Perumal, just in the way the old English sprang from Anglo-Saxon at the time of Alfred.

### ITS THREE HISTORICAL PHASES.

There are three well-marked phases in the origin and development of the language and its literature. The earliest specimens of the *pre-grantha* period went far towards Tamil

into which they merged almost beyond recognition. The subsequent specimens of the *post-grantha* period went likewise far towards Sanskrit into which they merged almost beyond identification. The third phase is marked by struggle for emergence from the super-imposition of Sanskrit. In all these three stages, there runs a common vein of the absorption and assimilation of the rich treasures of the Sanskrit literature. This is a common factor in the formation of all the vernacular literatures. It serves to furnish the common basis of Aryan thought and Aryan culture, making for the fundamental unity of cultural India. Therein lies the vital interest of Malayalam as well as other vernacular literatures in relation to the growth and civilisation of the people.

Accordingly, the history of the Malayalam language begins with "Ramacharitham," the oldest Malayalam poem still in existence. This was the work of a Travancore Maharaja—a circumstance of which Travancoreans have every reason to be proud. Thanks to the recent re-discovery of this rare work, the resurrection of what was supposed to have died with the death of Dr. Gundert who first discovered it and used it for his lexicon, has become possible. It puts within the reach of the present generation unimpeachable evidence as to the earliest state of the Malayalam language, composed as it was before the introduction of Sanskrit alphabet into the Malayalam language.

The introduction of the *grantha* alphabet brought in a large influx of the Sanskrit element and the most famous of the Malayalam writers wrote in Sanskrit first. This was soon followed by their own versions of the Sanskrit epics and of the several *puranas*. Writers on astronomy like Vararuchi, on law and morality like Bharthruhari, on religion and philosophy like Sankaracharya, on *Kavyas* like Sukumara Kavi and Vasudeva Bhattatiri and Narayana Bhattatiri, on *Sandesams* like Karukampalli Namburi, are typical instances in point. Mepathoor Narayana Bhattatiri, the reputed author of "Narayaneeyam" has epitomised the Bhagavatha

in this work of his, in the same manner as Ezhuthachan has summed up the Mahabharata in his monumental work. The *Champus* that characterise the Jaina advent, the *Manipravalas* of later time and the *Kathakalis* invented by the Rajas of Kottarakarai represent the transitional stage of de-Sanskritization with which commences the third period. Kunjan Nambyar is the pioneer national poet who has touched and tapped the fount of pure Malayalam undefiled. The latter part of this period was under a dual influence—influence of the Missionary scholars (Gundert, Garthwaite and Bailey) whose lexicographical and grammatical works in Malayalam answer to similar works of Caldwell and Dr. Pope in the Tamil and of Philip Brown in the Telugu literature; and the influence of Hindu Sanskrit savants and later Vernacular puritan revivalists. These different phases are more or less apparent in the several stages of development from the primitive Tamil of Maharaja Rama Varma's "Ramacharitham" of the past to the pure Malayalam of Vallathol's "Valmiki Ramayanam" of the present day.

#### MILITARY WRITINGS.

With the arrival of Brahmins, the great ardour for literary pursuits began. They began with works on military subjects so suited to the professional instinct of the Nairs. Even the "Ramacharitham" already referred to, leaves out the early incidents of the Ramayana. It is mainly confined to the military manœuvres elaborated in the war-section or the "Yudthakandam" of the original epic. This is in keeping with the object of the work which was to teach the art of war to the military sons of the soil. There are several works on the subject. But the best I have seen is a stout manuscript copy secured in the Palace *Grantha* Library, Trivandrum. It gives an elaborate and vivid description of the use of arms, designs of fortresses and bastions and carrying on of intricate and important military campaigns.

#### MEDICAL WORKS.

The Travancoreans developed also the science of medicine. It formed the special subject of study by the members of

eight families of the Namburi immigrants. They are known as Ashta Vydians. In some places they are called *Namburis* or *Numbis*. In other places they bear the name of Moos. Medicine, like astronomy, was an independent development in the country. The Nemburis explored and studied the original works in Sanskrit, such as the "Nidanams" of Madhavachari, the "Ashtanghridaya" of Vakbhatachari, the physiological works of the celebrated Susrutha and the *Materia Medica* of the eminent Charaka. They became very skilful in medicine, diagnosed and treated diseases and performed surgical operations wonderfully well. In course of time they themselves produced original works in Sanskrit which can be had now.

There is, however no knowing when and by whom they were composed. However, as will be seen later on, these works have been done into Malayalam. Although originally the study of medicine was prosecuted exclusively by the Namburis, the Amhalavasis (an intermediate class who were versed in Sanskrit) came also to be initiated into it. They in turn taught the subject to the neglected Nairs. And since the language of the latter is solely Malayalam, the Sanskrit works written by the Namburis were first translated into Malayalam. Dr. Gundert appears to have collected a good many of them and used them largely in the compilation of his valuable and voluminous Lexicon. These prose renderings seem to have been put into verse by several scholars subsequently. Of the "Ashta Vaidyans," Kuttancherry Moos was an eminent physician. In this family was found a Malayalam translation of the great medical work known as "Sahasrayogom." Alatur Nambi, another physician of repute, is said to have written "Roganidanam". The "Yogamitram," which is said to be the work of a Namburi of Triparayar, deals with the process of preparing drugs out of minerals and stones. "Vaidyamailka" is a very useful and important publication. It is a source of considerable help to indigenous medical practitioners.



## ASTRONOMICAL WORKS.

Astronomy also formed a subject of special study and interest. Like Indian Astronomy, it is the object of admiration in respect of observations made. It is also the object of contempt in respect of its degeneration, first into astrology and then into the "Mantravadams" of Malabar.

The exigencies of the national worship gave a great impulse to the Namburis to learn to calculate the solar year, the phases of the moon, and the disposition of the stars. They wrote original works based on the production of the Sanskrit Varahamihira and Aryabhatta and other writers on Indian Astronomy. One Namburi, whose name is unknown, wrote the "Tantrasangraham;" another, who is familiarly known as Vadacherry Namburi, was the author of "Jatakapaddhati." A third had composed a glossary on the same. This is the beginning of astrology. And in course of time, the "Brahmajatakam" of Varahamihira was translated; as also the "Lilavathi" and "Prasna-reethi." The last mentioned is the great work of Thalaculathoo Battathiri. Several original works were also written in Malayalam.

## LITERATURE ON LAW.

Law also engaged their close attention. It has been rightly observed that the first step towards the state of a civilized society is the protection of the right and property of persons. It is very gratifying to find that this most important measure had engaged the full attention of the original administrators of the realm. Major Walker, in his exhaustive report to the Madras Government on the land tenures of Malabar, has put on record "that in no country in the world is the nature and species of property better understood or its right more tenaciously maintained than in Malabar." This is quite as true in Travancore. In this country, as in Malabar, possession of land was originally inalienable, and consigned to Namburi Brahmins. There are two treatises on Malabar law: (1) "Vyavaharamala" and (2) "Vivada Ratnakaram," based more or less on the Institutes of Manu. Dr.

Gundert appears to have consulted the Malayalam renderings of these works. These works were probably written, when the power of the Brahmins began to decline and the petty Chiefs and the children of the soil commenced to rise to importance. *Ankam* and *Chunkam* were the two methods by which offenders in those days were punished. They deal with criminal and civil offences respectively. According to *Ankam* a person guilty of an offence was branded with a mark of degradation and sent away. He would be an object of contempt and warning wherever he went. And that was considered a severe and sufficient punishment in ancient times. The method of *Chunkam* required that an offender should take an oath on a *Palli Ambu* or the bow of the divine Rama. The bow would be planted on the ground and the person who had, for instance, failed to pay a debt or Government tax, would have had to swear by the holy bow that he would pay off the dues within a certain date. The faith of the people in the evil effects of an oath unfulfilled or broken was in those days as it is even now, so strong that the *Chunkam* method bound them sufficiently to discharge their obligations. Dewan Bahadur Govinda Pillay has embodied in verse the modern tenets of Malabar Law.

### EPICS IN MALAYALAM.

The great bulk of Malayalam literature consists of translations or adaptations of the great Indian epics—the Ramayana and the Mahabharatha. Thunchathu Ezhuthachan, who flourished in the 17th century, is the father of Malayalam literature. He was the first to introduce into the language its modern alphabet of the *grantha* character. He wrote several works which are the standing literature of the day, read with pleasure and profit. He has impressed on them the forms *Kilpattu* harmony—a species of composition supposed to be sung by a parrot. This literary artifice answers to Milton's "Sing, Heavenly Muse" or "Descend, ye Nine." The Ramayana, the Mahabharatha and the Bhagavatha of Ezuthatchan belong to this species of composition. They are his best works. It is a mistake to suppose that his

works are translations from the Sanskrit. No doubt he has drawn largely upon the rich lore of the great Indian Epics. But his consummate judgment in the selection and arrangement of the materials, his original reflections and his copious, pure and eloquent expressions have infused into his works a fresh soul of harmony. He is allowed the same rank among the Malayalam poets as Virgil among the Roman and Homer among the Greek poets.

### MALAYALAM LYRICS.

The first and the best of the Malayalam lyric poets is Kunjan Nambiyar. Gifted with talents of a high order, he invented a new type of national lyric called *Thullal*, of which the subtlety and pathos are eminently suited to the genius of the language. The merit of the *Thullals* lies in rapidity of metre, in simplicity of structure, in delineation of character, and in fineness of sentiments. Of this species of poems, he has a large number which will live and rouse up genuine interest as long as the language endures. The *Thullal* poems are more or less based on the incidents which fill the episodical portion of the Mahabharatha. Another kind of poetical composition which has immortalized his name is the "Manipravala," or poems in which the elegant pearls of the Sanskrit phraseology are interwoven with gems of native expression. This mixture of Malayalam and Sanskrit has manifested itself even in the composition of Mahakavyas of which "Uma-Keralam" of Kavithilakan Parameswara Iyer and "Rukmangatha" of Kerala Varma are specimens. Among recent original productions, "Mayura Sandesa" or the Peacock-Messenger by that Sanskrit savant—the late Kerala Varma Valia Koil Tampuran—is a typical specimen which I have done into English at the instance of Lord Ampthill who was much struck by it.

### MALAYALAM DRAMA.

The spirit of the Malayalam drama is illustrated by and summed up in what is known as *Katha Kali*. It has the feature of a pantomime, but the actors never speak. The play

is represented by mute action or dumb show, while the text will be vociferously sung by a party of musical experts. As the curtain rises, several actors enter the stage and translate into the language of finger-signs and other variety of show, the sense of the dramatic concepts. The science of symbols has attained a high state of perfection. The Maharajahs of this country took a special interest in *Kathakali* and had themselves composed several plays of this kind. The Maharajah who reigned from 1753 to 1793 and his brother Aswathi Thirunal, the Kottayam Rajah and the Kottarakarai Rajah are poets of repute in this kind of composition.

Of the new type of the drama, Kerala Varma Valia Kōl Tampuran is a great exponent. This scholar of rare attainments and culture, to whose self-denying earnestness and unremitting labours the Malayalam language owes so much, has given a turning-point to the structure and history of the the Malayalam drama by his translation of Kalidasa's matchless production of *Sakuntala*. The credit of translating it first goes to Raghava Nambiar. Kerala Varma's forte was Sanskrit and his masterly hand is manifest in "*Visakha-Vijayam*", "*Kamsa-Vadham*" and "*Pranama-Sathakam*". The model thus introduced was quickly followed by a host of playwrights—Chathukkutti Mannadyar, Kunjikkuttan Tampuran, Raja Raja Varma, Vallathol Narayana Menon, Kottarath Sankunni and others. Of these, the preference for pure Malayalam diction shown by Mannadiar and Vallathol is of course, unsurpassed. Kochunni Tampuran of Kodungallur has, in his "*Kalyani*", the first example of original dramatic composition; the ability displayed by the rest of them is only as translators. From this time, the art made great and rapid advancement.

Latterly, Dewan Bahadur Govinda Pillai introduced to the Malayalam-speaking public the type of the English Drama by his translations of some of Shakespeare's immortal plays. The new turn of poetical composition he has contrived to employ is the first specimen of Malayalam blank verse.

## MALAYALAM NOVEL.

This species of composition is of recent origin. The first Malayalam novel after the model of Sir Walter Scott is "Marthanda Varma". Sahitya Kusalan Raman Pillai, its gifted author, displays in this, as in his "Dharma Raja" and other novels, a singular acuteness in penetrating into the secret springs of national life and history. He has cleverly pieced together the fast-dying fragments of legends that gathered about the revered name of Marthanda Varma who, in the early days of the barons' wars, had wandered *incognito* through the forest glades of South Travancore. In "Akbar" by the Valia Koil Tampuran, we have specimens of the pathetic, the descriptive, the eloquent and even the sublime. The novels of Chandu Menon have decidedly a ring of Lord Lytton's wonderful works. His "Induleka," which has the rare merit of being done into English by Mr. Dumergue, is remarkable for the purity of its diction, tenderness of its sentiment and the light it throws on Malabar manners and customs.

## LATER LITERATURE.

Though the language was indebted to a foreign Missionary for its first Grammar and Lexicon, the History of its Literature was first produced by a native to whose talents and perseverance it bears ample testimony.

Dazzled by the multiplicity of striking objects which actively shape and illumine contemporary literature, the pioneers of literary advancement organized in 1891 a Literary Sabha for the enrichment of Malayalam literature. Every department of letters began to be actuated by a spirit of progressive activity. The variety and abundance of works produced in a few years are eminently marvellous. With the composition of the "Kerala Paniniyam" by Raja Raja Varma, the language has received a new lease of life. The "Bhasha Bhushan" by the same gifted writer is the first treatise in Malayalam rhetoric. His "Angaleya Samra Jyam" which is a Sanskrit *Kavyam* on the glories of the British

Empire, displays his deep Sanskrit scholarship. The appearance of the Introductory and Chemistry Primers in Malayalam, followed now by Mr. Raja Raja Varma Raja's "Science Series" marks the beginning of scientific literature embodying modern science and modern thought. The translation of Dutt's "Ancient India," and other publications point to the progress in historical literature. The out-put of periodical literature has grown considerably, in keeping with the growing spirit of reform everywhere.

The ennobling patriotic impulse and unwearied industry of scholars are fighting against all odds to enrich the Malayalam literature. In this connection, the following observations of His Highness the late Visakhani Maha Rajah should be prominently borne in mind :—"The language is one which had no systematic grammar of its own till European philologists made it—each of them evolving one according to his lights and ideas. I don't know whether Gundert, Peet, Garthwaite and others agree in anything but in disagreeing with one another. Hence Mangalore, Calicut, Cochin, Kottayam and Trivandrum have each its own Malayalam. *There is no such thing as Queen's Malayalam, as there is Queen's English.*" The "Kerala Panineeyam" itself has too far a leaning towards Sanskrit.

Apart from original Sanskrit works such as the "Angaleya Samrajyam", "Bhaktimanjari", "Visakha Vijayam", "Sarvaswateeka", "Pranamasathakam", "Kshamapana sahasram", &c., there are Sanskrit renderings in verse of pure foreign prose works like Duessen's "Metaphysics". All this distinctly displays the marked partiality for Sanskrit continuing down to the present day. The turning into Sanskrit of the famous Ikkavu Amma's "Subhadrarajuneeyam" in original Malayalam is somewhat a heretical turning of tables. No wonder therefore that Malayalam is still heaving under the weight of Sanskrit intrusion. It has therefore got to be, first of all, lifted from the burden of Sanskrit so bigotedly borne in upon it, even by some *Kuvans* and *Thilakans* and *Sarasans* of its literature.

In these days when the development of Vernacular Education, enrichment of Vernacular literature and assimilation of world-culture are marked features in the new educational system, the necessity of an Anglo-Malayalam Technological Lexicon is being increasingly felt.

In these and other directions lies a field, a wide field, a national field and an urgent one, for real patriotic work.

## Section III.

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### HISTORY (Constitutional.)

What the State has done.

#### I

### Early Travancore.

#### INTRODUCTORY.

About a third of India and one-fourth of its population are under the direct rule of Indian princes and chiefs. In the eloquent words of Lord Curzon:—"Side by side with our own system, and sometimes almost surrounded by British territory, there are found in this wonderful country, the possessions, the administration, the proud authority and the un-challenged traditions of the Native dynasties—a combination which, both in the picturesque variety of its contrast, and still more in the smooth harmony of its operation is, I believe, without parallel in the history of the world". They have now, as in the past, proved their splendid loyalty to the British Empire. They unreservedly recognise the essential benefits they have gained and are gaining, under the British suzerainty. And just because they are convinced that hitherto they have been led along the path of progress, their true appreciation and not any idle sentiment, has, at the recent war-crisis, resulted in a measure of devotion and self-sacrifice almost unparalleled in history. Under the vigour and influence of British rule, whose policy is "to retain the Native States intact, to prolong and fortify their existence, and to safeguard the prestige and authority of their rulers," the system of Indian states has come to be so fitted into the Imperial Edifice that it forms part and parcel of the Empire. The institution of the Imperial Conference of Indian Princes at Delhi reflects the development of thought and ideas arising from British connexion and British model as the basis of their present political constitution. In writing the history of an Indian State therefore, a proper perspective cannot be had,



unless things are looked at as a whole and not in isolated parts. Indian States should be looked at in an ampler atmosphere. Each should be approached in consociation with the neighbouring and other States and as an integral part of the British Empire. In this view, the history of Travancore will be found to be of high significance and special interest at this juncture. For this purpose, a record of events year by year, with dates and documents will not do. We should sift the mass of historical facts, and allocate them in proportion to historical importance and co-ordinate these with the epoch-making events in the history of the country.

The history of Travancore is the resultant of two forces—the force of tradition on the one hand, and the impact and influence of British civilisation on the other. It proceeds on two different planes. Our present concern is with this double side. We must be conscious of two back-grounds, and try to understand first something of the tradition of thought in which it was reared. Next, we should endeavour to gauge the re-action against the old tradition and ideals, and measure the change. In dealing with the first, we must see Travancore in its own original atmosphere.

#### OLDEST INDIAN STATE.

Travancore is the mirror of Ancient India, the sole survivor and specimen of strong and splendid traditions. It is the most Indian of Indian States, and lives up to the full meaning of its hoary tradition. This is due to the venerable antiquity of the Royal House which dates back several centuries before the birth of Christ, long before the modern European nations came into existence. Apart from the specific, and often episodical references in the Ramayana, the Mahabharatha, the Mahabhagavatha, and the Puranas, the earliest historical record of the importance of the kingdom is to be traced in the transhipment of pepper, ivory, and sandalwood in 1000 B. C, by King Solomon's merchant-ships manned by the Phœnicians—the earliest traders who had the monopoly of the seas till the destruction of Tyre by Alexander in 332 B. C. The edicts of Asoka have specific reference to the Royal House of Chera—a circumstance which is indicative

## PETTY PRINCIPALITIES.

On the death or disappearance of the last of the Cheraman Perumals and the consequent downfall and disruption of the Chera Empire at the commencement of the Malabar Era, they asserted their independence and set at defiance the several chieftains who became rulers of the land. These were numerous and their territory in each case scarcely exceeded the size of a modern taluq. Elluvarnad answering to modern Nedumangad, and Elayadathunad answering to Kottarakarai were both independent domains. Oonad or Kayankulam, embracing the districts of Karunagapally, Karthigapally, and Mavelikara, was a fine territory having its own ruler. Iyroornad or Pandalam was an independent principality. The Brahmin principality of Venhanad was comprised within the boundary of modern Ambalapuzhai ruled by Chembagaseri Rajahs. Old fortifications intersected the country of Vadakankur and Thekkankur whose Rajahs held sway over the tracts of land between Pandalam and Perumbayur. Kottayam was held by a Kartha, Meenachel by a Samander chief, and Shertallay by Madmpimars or feudatories of Cochin. Edapally too had its own independence, and Alengad had its own Rajah. We find the first Travancore sovereign who, in token of his direct descent from the stock of the original Chera Emperor, styled himself Kulasekhara Perumal, ruling over the bit of land between Anjengo and Oodaghiri—the nucleus of modern Travancore.

## ECCLESIASTICAL COUNCIL.

The most dominant feature of the times was the influence of ecclesiastical councils and village assemblies in the administration of affairs. The council governed the affairs of Devaswoms; and the ancient constitution, under which the most important temple of Sri Padmanabha was managed, is still in force. The Council consisted of one Namburi Sannyasi, six Potti Brahmins, and one Nair nobleman, each having a vote, while the sovereign, who was also a member of this governing body, possessed only half a vote. Thus

there were  $8\frac{1}{2}$  votes in all on account of which the Council came to be known as *Etтарayogam* or the Council of the eight-and-a-half. It is traced to the commencement of the Malabar Era, on the basis of old records in the Trivandrum pagoda. We know nothing of the working of this Council till its first historic session held 235 years later when the rules for the management of the temple were renewed. The only historical fact known during the period is the continuance of the of the Cholas and the Pandyas in Nanjanad. Towards the close of the third century M. E., Travancore defeated the Pandyan King Rajasimhan and his confederate Nanja Kuravan at the Battle of the Pandyan Dam, and conquered Kottar and the portion of Nanjanad under their sway. (1117 A. D./292 M. E.). Veera Kerala Varma, his successor, appears to have kept at bay the Chola power in the land, by a sort of political peace-offering which consisted of a dedication of the tax in paddy and money, due from Vadasery, as a gift to the temple of Rajendra Choleswara.

### PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY.

It was, during the period of his two immediate successors, that the Chola power was driven out of the land and the remaining portion of Nanjanad added to the kingdom. It was at this time that the village governments which had existed before, came to be duly recognised and supported by the sovereign. We also notice the existence of a triumvirate for the administration of affairs in Nanjanad. From the evidence of inscriptions, it is seen that, besides the village-associations, there was also an important public body under the name of the "Six-Hundred. The supervision of the temples and charities seems to have vested in this corporation. While regretting lack of information as to what other powers and privileges it possessed, the late Prof. Sundram Pillai observes in his "Early sovereigns of Travancore", that a number so large, nearly as large as the British House of Commons, could not have been meant in so small a state as Vened was in the 12th Century A. D. /4th Century M. E., for the single function of state-supervision. It looks probable that this body either

elected the barons or indirectly influenced the business transacted by the chieftains in charge of the eighteen districts into which, according to this record, the country appears to have been divided at the time. Such a probability receives countenance as a legacy of the Brahmin colonists of Parasurama, who tried several modes of Government—first a republic, then an oligarchy, and finally a system of protectors elected from the villages. These chieftains took for themselves a portion of the land within their jurisdiction in return for the protection afforded by them to the rest of the community, in the same way as the original *Rakshapurushas* or protectors. They became a powerful political factor, and their Revenue collectors who belonged to eight families of Nair nobles and were therefore known as *Ettuettupillamar*, became a source of oppression to the people. The Assembly loudly cried out against this, and its powerful voice prevailed, as is evident from the Manalikai inscription of 410 M. E., 1235 A. D.

### A GREAT CHARTER.

It contains the Proclamation issued by the sovereign in terms of the resolutions passed at the historic session of the Kodanellur Assembly. The Proclamation prohibits the farming out of lands to the highest bidder by the ecclesiastical dignitary who enjoyed the revenues; empowers members of the Sabha to inspect the lands in seasons of drought and the consequent failure of crops; provides for the authorization in writing to realize or to remit arrears and other minor charges; and generally recognises the principle of accepting what "the members of the Sabha and the inhabitants agree among themselves and pray for, in common."

Prof. Sundaram Pillay rightly calls it one of the great charters of Travancore, and comments as follows:—"Here is proof, if need be, of the independent nature and the constitution of the old Village Assemblies of Travancore. The Sabhas appear as permanent and well-constituted public bodies that acted as a buffer between the people and the Government. The whole procedure reflects the greatest credit on all the parties concerned, their conjoint action

resulting in so precious a charter to the people and so unmistakable a monument of the sovereign's unbounded love of his subjects."

### A GREAT REBELLION.

This measure was naturally displeasing to the *Yogakars* with whose predial liberty it interfered, and it necessarily exasperated the rebel barons to whose rapacity as Revenue collectors it gave the death-blow. These bodies therefore combined together to undermine the influence of the Assembly and to checkmate the authority of the king. But during the reign of the Rajah who issued the Proclamation, and of some of his successors all of whom were capable rulers, they could not but submit to authority. The opposition which continued for a long period came to a head when a weak King, Aditya Varma, ascended the throne. The invasion of Nanjinad by Tirumala Naik, the greatest of the Pandyan kings, brought matters to a crisis. The people were harassed both by the invaders from without and by the insurgents from within. When after plunder, the former were out, the latter were in, to extort money in the name of defence. The king was helpless. The people of Nanjinad decried him in meetings assembled, and flew into an open revolt. Easily therefore, the barons carried everything before them; they ran neck and neck for domination, pursued the king to Trivandrum, sacked and burnt the new palace built by him there, and eventually poisoned him. To these deeds of violence, they added the atrocious murder of five children of the surviving Ranee, Oomayamma, to whom however they ostensibly protested allegiance, while they really prepared to extirpate the Royal House and to erect on its ashes a protectorate under the rule of one of themselves. The next three sovereigns were not able to put down the rebels.

In this state of anarchy and confusion, Marthanda Varma, the maker of modern Travancore, ascended the throne of his ancestors in 1729 A. D. In describing the state of affairs then, the late Maha Rajah truly observes; "Rajah Marthanda Varma succeeded to a heritage as thorny as it was poor. The feeble rule of a series of his predecessors had fostered the greed of the surrounding chieftains and the

turbulence of internal malcontents to such an extent that their kingdom was almost a misnomer, and their authority little better than a mockery."

## II

## Travancore in the making.

## RULER RESCUED.

With the instincts of a born ruler of men, Marthanda Varma set about the hard task before him. The first thing he had to do was to rid the country of the incubus of the disloyal and wicked barons. Their inveterate hatred his powerful personability had already drawn, even as a young prince, when, during the last reign, he participated in the alliance-treaty with the Pandyan King in order to put down their lawlessness. Their regicidal proclivity came to be closely borne in on him, when his life was attempted by them at the Kalliankad temple. His providential escape from his perilous position there, in the guise of a *Santhikaran*, was due to the ready ingenuity of the *Santhikaran* (an East Coast Brahman) who loyally underwent self-martyrdom in the folds of the royal regalia which he timely exchanged for his own, to save the life of the king, as evident from the temple records and *Dinavasanom* according to which the descendants of the *Thala Kodutha Aiyar* (literally the Brahmin who gave up his head) enjoy the royal gifts of lands to the present day. When Marthanda Varma became the acknowledged sovereign of the land, the feudal barons who tried to take away his life before, attempted now to take away his title of succession to the throne. To make out that he was a usurper they instigated the two *Tampis* to set up their claim to the throne as sons of the late ruler and to seek the intercession of the powerful Pandyan chief to put them on their father's throne. The principle of natural justice easily appealed to that ruler of Patriarchal descent.

## 'PANDYAN ARBITRATION'

There was the misrepresentation of Marthanda Varma's attitude towards him as hostile. He had an opportunity too of taking his own chance as a potent arbiter of rival claims,

The result was the deputation of a Pandyan force under Azhagappa Mudaliar to enquire into the matter and espouse the cause of the Thampis. The armed deputation arrived at Oodaghiry and encamped there. Rama Iyen who first came to the notice of the Rajah as the young Brahmin boy who trimmed the wick and brightened the lamp at the Rajah's banquet and who was destined to cast a fresh lustre on the name and the country of his royal master, was the Palace *Rayasom* or Under Secretary—an office of considerable trust and responsibility at the time. He met the armed deputation in conference and gave a clear insight into the matriarchal law of inheritance adopted by the Royal family. The arrangement explained by Rama Iyen must have originally taken place in the midst of the mist that hangs over the period intervening the commencement of the Malabar Era and the first adoption of heirs into the Royal house, as archeological evidence discloses several instances in point of the prevalence of the patriarchal system before.

### PRINCIPLE OF MATRIARCHY. .

The several branches of the Kolath stock from which the Royal House takes its descent are collateral off-shoots of the same parental stock and as such, according to Hindu law, cannot intermarry. The preservation of ancestral position and purity of stock and the gradual extinction of other stocks except the *Dayadi* descendants, have naturally led to the adoption of members from collateral branches as sisters of the reigning sovereign and to the importation of Koil Thampurans, for marital alliance with them. The line of descent thus came to be through females. The Tampis or children of sovereigns by their consorts—generally Nair ladies of great lineage and family—do not inherit the kingdom or anything else of the king. It is a remarkable fact, in the dispute of a century ago, between the Rajah of Travancore and the Pandyan ruler as to the sovereignty of Nanjinad, the decision in favour of the former turned upon the loyal adoption of the Travancore law of succession by the Nanjinadians.

The outcome of the conference was the dismissal of the claims set up by the Tampis. The acceptance of the principle of *decensus a matrice* in the Trvancore Royal House by the Pandyan ruler, is an event of historical importance, because it led later on to the expulsion of the pretender-prince of Mavelikarai, and eventually formed the basis of Lord Canning's sannad of adoption after the country had passed into the protectorate of the present-day Paramount Power.

### EXTIRPATION OF REBELS.

Before withdrawal, the Pandyan arbiter who readily found in Marthanda Varma the rightful ruler, was pleased to place at his disposal, a portion of the Pandyan Military contingent as a help to quell the internal rebellion. This struck terror into the hearts of the insurgents. Marthanda Varma then opened negotiations with the *naffars* of Nanjanad, exempted them from the imposts that pressed on them, and took them into his confidence. He next made peace with the East India Company who had already established a factory at Anjengo, and whose fury the feudal rebels had roused by their violent attack on the place, while it was being fortified, and by the subsequent murder of some of the English factors. He made amends by awarding them lands in Pataladi and Kotudall, and secured their good will and support. Having strengthened his hands thus, he mobilised a powerful army, and extinguished once and for all, the lawless hand of barons who had ravaged the country and robbed it of peace for over two centuries.

### EXPANSION OF TERRITORY.

Ramien, the King's trusted lieutenant at his back all the while, now became *Dalurah*, which united in him the functions of minister and commander-in-chief. The subsequent Military expeditions and the extensive expansion of territory were entirely due to the wonderful ability and genius of this soldier-statesman, "great in council, great in war". He supplemented the militia by regiments drawn from companies of maravars, and fought and won several battles. The most



notable victory was the one achieved at Colachel over the Dutch force in 1740. This victory over their rivals drew the East India Company into closer contact with Travancore, and secured, at the same time, the services of the Dutch Captain De Lannoy who improved the quality of the native army. With the force thus equipped and disciplined, Rama Iyen carried his arms successfully as far north as Cochin and built up, from a few scattered districts, the extensive kingdom of to-day, save the outlying tracts of Alangad and Parur which were ceded by the Rajah of Cochin afterwards. He then inaugurated a Revenue system which is the foundation of the Revenue Administration of to-day.

### AN ACT OF STATE POLICY.

To this marvellous achievement of state-conquest and state-control, the heroic sovereign superadded a state-religion. He reconstructed the ancient national Shrine of Sri Padmanabha, dedicated the dominion to the presiding Deity, and assumed sovereignty in His name and as a sacred trust. In the dedication of the kingdom to Sri Padmanabha, the Guardian God of the Royal House, Mr. A. B. Clarke of Baroda sees a magnificence of idealism worthy of commemoration and adds: "True, it has occurred in many states both of the East and the West, that the ruler, devotionally inspired, has made over his State to his God; none the less, the act takes possession of imagination". He constitutionalized into a homogeneous whole the system in which the different districts whose policy it separately marked off before the conquest, naturally and readily coalesced. In this great act of policy, Marthanda Varma followed the spirit and example of the times under the operation of which, as historian Green remarks:—"Even a distant country like England became the people of a book and that book was the Bible." To the policy and position of the State as determined by this fundamental fact, Mr. V. P. Madhava Row thus refers in his address to the Popular Assembly constituted during his Dewanate:—"Those who are familiar with the history of the State know and realize the full import and significance of the great act of State

policy adopted in the middle of the 18th century by the illustrious Rajah Marthanda Varma of immortal fame, by which the sovereign, after subjugating the different principalities and chieftain-ships and consolidating them into the compact kingdom as you find it to-day, dedicated the whole State to the presiding Deity. The character thus stamped on the State has never been lost sight of by his successors on the throne of Travancore, and they have striven to discharge the sacred trust handed down to them with unswerving loyalty".

### MARTHANDA VARMA'S SUCCESSOR.

The constructive work thus completed by Marthanda Varma was further consolidated by his successor Rama Varma—also an illustrious sovereign. He was called Dharma Rajah because of his nearest approach to the ideal of a Hindu king. He was also familiarly known as Kizhavan Rajah because of his having been the longest-lived Ruler of Travancore, in modern times. He was well-skilled in arms, and bore a conspicuous part in the warfare of his heroic uncle. Prince Rama Varma revealed his ingenuity then by going out, dressed like a Moslem, into the enemies' camp to know their plans, and making good his escape as the Nair page and torch-bearer of a Namburi dignitary. With General De Lannoy as his right hand, this sovereign helped his weak neighbours and held his own against foreign aggression. The ambitious Zamorin of Calicut over-ran Cochin, Rama Varma to whom the Cochin Rajah applied for help, defeated and drove back the Zamorin who, by further pursuit to his capital, was forced to enter into an alliance-treaty with Travancore. The Cochin Rajah too became a grateful ally, and ceded the tributary States of Alangad and Parur, for service rendered.

### FRONTIER-FORTIFICATIONS.

Dalawah Marthanda Pillay, whose name is associated with this victorious campaign, died soon after and was succeeded by Subbier of Varkalai in whose ability and integrity the Ruler had great confidence. Dalawah Subbier secured by

agreement the surrender of the sovereign-rights of the petty Rajahs over the ceded districts of Alangad and Parur, fixed the boundary of the northern frontier and fortified it with extensive military lines as a further protection from the possible inroads of Hyder Ali whose power and schemes of conquest were growing day by day. This was a fitting supplement to the Aramboli frontier-fortifications in the south built by the great Dalawah Ramien in the previous reign for the complete defence of the country. The military writer Horsburgh describes Ramien's southern lines as being a low country divided by a wall or trench stretching from the shore to the mountains and fortified by mounds of earth. He refers to Subbier's northern frontier-line as the northern boundary towards Calicut, running east and west from a point of hills deemed inaccessible, chiefly behind the south of a river (Periyar) which discharges itself into the estuary between Cranganore and Ayacotta. As observed by Shungoony Menon in his History of Travancore, "Subbier finally completed the work most energetically commenced by Ramien". Hence, the Rajah was in a position to challenge Hyder's threatened invasion which however this Dalawah did not live to resist.

#### TREATY WITH THE EAST INDIA COMPANY,

It was given to Rajah Kesava Das to render signal services when hostilities commenced. He was an able and patriotic minister. By his splendid efforts he kept an even keel in the troubled waters of terrific warfare. To him belongs the credit of the present political treaty-relationship with the East India Company. It was in recognition of his firm attachment to the Company that Lord Mornington conferred on him the title of Rajah. This attachment was only a reflex of the sovereign's affinity to the Company, for the Commissioners who sat on the Malabar Land Settlement of 1792 have put on record:—"We own he left a favourable impression on our minds both as to his personal good qualities and what we consider as unequivocal sincerity of his attachment to the East India Company".

The cordiality of this connection came to be completely lost sight of in the weak reign of Rama Varma's successor called, *Avittam Thirunal* Rama Varma. All his ministers easily supplanted his authority, and exercised an absolute influence on the conduct of affairs. The policy of his first minister, (whose rise to that position was clouded with suspicion of the murder of his predecessor, Rajah Kesava Das), led to the insurrection of 1799. Velu Tampi who headed this insurrection, and whose advancement as Prime Minister was associated with the concoction of circumstances responsible for the murder of his two rivals—the close kinsmen of Rajah Kesava Das, pursued alike a policy suicidal to himself and his country's cause. The key-note of his policy was cruelty and vindictiveness. The effect of this on the Nair troops whose military allowance he reduced, was their mutiny in a body to get rid of him—the same method which he pursued towards his predecessor. The subsidence of this internal commotion through the intervention of the British Force, caused the revision of the subsidiary engagement. Through the efforts of Col. Macaulay, the first British Resident appointed by the East India Company in 1800, a fresh treaty was entered into in 1805.

### REVISED TREATY OF PERPETUAL FRIENDSHIP AND ALLIANCE.

This treaty which continues to govern the present political relation of the state with the Paramount Power confirmed the sincere and cordial relations of peace and amity between the Rajah and the East India Company. It is known as the Treaty of perpetual friendship and alliance between them. By this treaty the Rajah was required to pay for a native regiment in addition to the subsidy fixed in 1795 (in all eight lacs of Rupees a year) and further to share the expenses of his large forces when necessary, to pay at all times the utmost attention to the advice of the British Government, to hold no communication with any foreign state, and to admit no European foreigner or to allow him to remain in his territory without the sanction of the British Government,

## A DARK EPISODE.

The increased subsidy and the reserved power of interference which the New Treaty brought into being incensed Velu Tampi, while the arrears into which he allowed the subsidy to fall, and his arbitrary and even atrocious methods of administration roused the wrath of Col. Macaulay, and each hated the other as the scourge of the country, and as his own foe. Velu Tampi, the sworn child of revolt, organized an insurrection to murder Macaulay and to subvert the British power. He made his murderous attack on the Cochin Residency at first, but failed in his attempt there. He made his second attack on the British garrison at Quilon. In the interval of this bloody campaign, he perpetrated a wholesale massacre of Europeans. Wilson, in his *History of India*, thus refers to the massacre:—"About the same time, a small vessel with some of the soldiers of the 12th Regiment on board having touched at Alleppey for supplies, the men were induced to land by appearance of cordiality among the people, and assurances that part of the subsidiary force was in the neighbourhood. Unaware that hostilities had commenced, the men disembarked, and as soon as they landed, were made prisoners and shortly afterwards murdered. This was also done by the order of the Dewan who thus effaced by his perfidy and cruelty whatever credit he might have claimed for zeal in the cause of his country and his prince." This inhuman act which stained Velu Tampi's name and national honor with a stain that could never be effaced, aroused the British Government to a sense of righteous indignation, and the British troops which saved Travancore from subjection to the power of Tippu and which never set foot on its soil save in its defence, marched for its invasion. The alarmed Rajah's entire innocence, his candid disclaimer of the insurgents, his promise to defray the expenses of the military expedition, and his piteous plea for protection, immediately followed by the suicidal death of the dangerous Dalawah, restored friendly relations with the British Government.

## A GRAVE CRISIS.

Omminy Tampi who became Dewen after this insurrection, also usurped the Rajah's power. By letting his administration fall into a most disorganized state, he plunged the country in deep debt, and by allowing the subsidy to fall into arrears almost equal to an year's revenue of the state, he evoked the threat of the Paramount Power to assume direct Government. It was at this moment Col. Macaulay retired, and the Rajah died. The striking features of his inglorious reign are thus summarised in the State Manual:—"His is the darkest page of Travancore History, and is a by-word for all that is unlucky and incapable in the administration of affairs, for the persecution of retired officials, and the ill-treatment of their families, for the corruption and rapacity of public servants, for the disloyalty of ministers, and for the wanton faithlessness towards the East India Company, our staunchest friends and allies."

There was none to succeed the Rajah save the Regent-Ranee. Her right of succession was closely contested by a prince of Mavelikarai, who, by installing himself into the favour of the deceased Rajah, bore on that account, the contemptuous sobriquet of Elaya Rajah or Heir-Apparent. It was at this critical juncture that Col. Munro became the accredited representative of the Paramount Power.

## III.

## Travancore in Transition.

## A NEW EPOCH.

The 19th century marked the dawn of the new era with the commencement of Col. Munro's regime, just in the same way as the 18th century rang in a new epoch with the beginning of Marthanda Varma's reign. Col. Munro's first great act was to dismiss the claims of the pretender-prince of Mavelikarai and to recognise the Ranee as the rightful Ruler. With the approval of the British Government he installed the queen on the throne of her ancestors and placed the disappointed prince under surveillance, when the latter showed signs of disaffection, and deported him first to Tellicherry

and then to Chingelput as a state-prisoner, when such disaffection tended to imperil the interests of the country.

On her accession to the throne, the sagacious queen dispensed with the services of Dewan Ommini Tampi who had proved disloyal to her uncle and whose method of administration had brought the country to the verge of ruin. In view of the disordered state of the country, she placed complete confidence in the protection of the Paramount Power and sought the help of the Resident to conduct the administration. The British Government fully concurred in her views because they considered that the spirit of low intrigues which the history of the country then exhibited, could not be effectually suppressed under the administration of a native Dewan. In order to lift the country from the depths of declension into which it had fallen, they directed Col. Munro to assume the duties of the Dewan, in addition to his own as British Resident. This was in 1811. This policy of co-operation in a new direction is a highly-valued concession of great historical importance, because it is a half-way house between the policy of annexation, the danger of which is absolute annihilation of native sovereignty, and the policy of direct administration for a time, the danger of which is the interruption of native rule in the interval.

#### DEPORTATION OF A DALAWAH.

In the elevation of Munro as supreme head of affairs, the retired Dewan Omminy Tampi saw only a preliminary political design to annex the country and a personal motive to crush his own position and power. He carried on a series of low intrigues quite in keeping with his antecedents. As observed by Col. Munro, "his behaviour towards the Rajah (late) was harsh and vindictive, his management of the country was irregular and oppressive, and his conduct to the Resident (late) exhibited a system of deception and counter-action. He was particularly obnoxious to the Ranees and his continuance in Office would therefore be unfavourable to the attainment of close and cordial union between the States

(Travancore and the British Government.)" He completely beat his previous record and vied with Velu Tampi by plotting against the life of Col. Munro with the deserved and dismal result that he was deported as a State-prisoner to Chingleput.

### MUNRO'S REGIME.

Col. Munro had at the outset of his administration to contend with three main difficulties apparently irreconcilable and amounting almost to an impossibility. With the dead weight of the State debt which, including arrears of subsidy, had gone beyond the average annual revenue, hanging heavily on him, he had on the one hand to discharge his obligation to the Ranees by maintaining her dignity and authority consistently with progressive rule. This could be done only by increased revenue. He had on the other hand to conciliate the people by the abolition of obnoxious imposts and other burdens which pressed heavily on them. This meant an obvious fall in the revenue. Two or three simple facts furnish the key to Munro's success in overcoming these difficulties. With the clear vision of a statesman, he perceived at once that the confusion and corruption in which the country was steeped arose from the unhappy combination of civil, military and judicial functions in the *Kariakars*. Under a weak rule such a system easily became the hot-bed of political commotion, official mismanagement and popular discontent. He accordingly split up the combination and recast the administrative machinery on the model of the British system.

### REVISED SYSTEM.

He established a centralized form of Government and affiliated to it separate departments for the discharge of each function. He abolished the superfluous offices of *Valia-Sarvadhikars*, and reduced the *Kariakars* to the position of Revenue Collectors with the designation of *Tabsidars*. He formed a separate department for the control of accounts and finance and opened a *Mahratta Efficiency* system on the lines of the constitution of the *Collector's Cutcherry* at the time.



On the ashes of the judicial and military powers exercised by the *Kariakars*, Munro raised an efficient corps of Police for the detection of crimes and preservation of order, and created a separate judicial branch for the proper administration of justice. To the elements of responsibility thus fixed on the constitution, he added a code of Revenue laws and Civil regulations and enforced sanction and discipline. This effectively put down, on the one hand the abuses to which the old system was open, and secured on the other, a free flow of revenue which chronic mismanagement and malversation had arrested before. After placing the administration on an efficient footing, Munro ameliorated the condition of the people by the abolition of several unjust taxes and oppressive imposts, and by the remission of unrecovered revenue balances of ancient date. The immense sacrifice of revenue, which this step necessarily involved was more than compensated by the volume of popular discontent it removed.

### A MOMENTOUS MEASURE.

Among the several measures adopted for the improvement of revenue, by far the most important was the assumption of Devaswoms or religious institutions under Sirkar control. It was a measure of far reaching consequence. It emancipated tenants from the oppression to which they had been subjected. It safe-guarded the interests of the Dewasomis themselves by a guarantee of their maintenance by the state and ensured the principle of trust inherent to the assumption of these endowed institutions, and brought a large addition of revenue to the State. Nevertheless, it will remain as a memorable instance in which interest counted more than ethics, Governmental need more than popular right.

Thus in less than four years, Munro introduced order, extinguished corruption, established a new constitution, enlarged the revenue, and gave back the kingdom in complete peace and tranquillity for Native administration. The excellence of his administrative acts which removed public wrongs was equalled only by the redress of social injustice such as the active steps he took to abolish slavery, save in

regard to predial labour—an outstanding measure of philanthropy, sacrificing immense interests to morality. With the happy memory of this boon to her subjects declared by Royal Proclamation, Ranee Lakshmi Bai passed away in 1814.

### REGENCY OF PARVATHI BAI.

During the minority of her son, her sister Parvathi Bai ruled as Regent with marked ability for 15 years, during the first five of which Col. Munro continued to be Resident. It was during this period that various Missionary agencies, were at his instance, permitted to settle in the country and were generously encouraged by substantial donations in money and land. Consistently with the scope given to Missionary enterprise for improving the condition of the Syrians, the oldest Christian subjects of the realm, the exaction of *inam* or free service from them, in connection with the Hindu festivals, was put a stop to. Even after the relinquishment of the ministerial office, Munro guided the administration entirely, till his departure in 1819, so that all the benefits of good government could be traced to his counsel and control.

The people who looked upon his administration as a boon and a blessing to them perpetuated his memory by providing lights called "Munro lights" at the dangerous creeks and crossings in the deep backwaters. If Macaulay admitted Travancore into the political system of the British protectorate, Munro admitted it to the administrative system of British Provinces. Truly therefore, the Munro-period was a period of transition.

### A POET KING.

The Regency of Parvathi Bai which was marked by the removal of very many social disabilities and the promotion of material prosperity, came to a close in 1829 when Prince Rama Varma attained his majority and was placed on the throne. He was an able Ruler. He abolished many grievous taxes. He laid the foundation of the modern system of education by establishing an English School at Trivandrum in 1840. He took a most intelligent interest in Science and

other branches of learning and erected an Observatory. The removal of the Huzur Cutcherry from Quilon to Trivandrum; the improvement of the Nair Brigade; the abolition of the Huzur Courts for the first time; the promulgation of a new Law Code on the model of the British enactment; the commencement of Survey operations; and the introduction of printing and lithography are some of the important measures during his reign. He was a great scholar and linguist. He had extraordinary talents and fine taste for the fine arts which he much encouraged. He was a great poet and composed verses in Sanskrit, Malayalam, Telugu, and Marathi.

### LATTER-DAY TROUBLES.

Though he did much for the improvement of the country the period covered by the latter part of his reign and the first half of that of his successor was not conspicuous for success. This period was one of political undoing and inefficiency. The force that fashioned Munro's policy was a strong-bound confidence which secured both identity of interest and concentration of effort. Reddy Row, the Mahratta scholar and accountant whom Munro had brought to re-organise the financial branch of the Administration, faithfully followed and fulfilled the principle and policy of his patron during his tenure of office as Dewan. The same policy was pursued by Dewan Raya Raya Venkita Rao, (brother of Dewan Renga Rao, and uncle of Dewan Sir T. Madhava Rao) who all belonged to one of those Mahratta families that came down to the south and made Tanjore the chief out-post of the Mahratta Empire and the nursery of Indian statesmen. He held office in the British Service but left it at the instance of Mr. Heborn who introduced him to Col. Mc. Douall the British Resident, and entered the Travancore State Service. By dint of ability he soon rose to the high office of Dewan and distinguished himself. He was considered a public servant of the first order and when he was appointed to the Mysore Commission, Lord William Bentinck conferred on him the title of "Raya Raya Raya". With the advent of Cullen as Resident, a reverse policy set in. He

wished to have things in his own ways and strove to retain powers which could not be exercised consistently with the position and authority of the Rajah. The result was irreconcilable misunderstanding between the Rajah and the Resident to which the rival factions among their respective adherents, for the ministerial portfolio contributed not a little. Dewans were made and unmade, now as a concession to the Resident, now as an assertion of the Rajah's authority. Each successive Dewan dugged the grave of his predecessor only to be swallowed up in turn by the intrigues of his successor. Thus there was no permanent Dewan for a long time. The Resident's constant interference in internal affairs reached such a pitch that the Rajah felt that he was, as remarked by Sir William Dennison, "like a tenant who although he paid his rent regularly was compelled to cultivate his farm according to the will of his land-lord," and once even went the length of declaring his intention of abdicating the throne. The tremendous minute issued by the Madras Government on the Rajah's complaint of his ill-treatment set things at rest for a time. But the Resident's hostile attitude continued till his own protege Krishna Row was put in as a permanent Dewan.

### A CATASTROPHE THREATENED.

Soon after, the Rajah died and was succeeded by Marthanda Varma in 1847. During Krishna Row's effete administration, discontent reached its climax, and the state of the country was critical. In 1855 the Madras Government, to whom severe comments in the press and bitter complaints from the people against the Dewan and the Resident together disclosed the critical state of affairs, addressed the Government of India for the appointment of a Commission of enquiry. The Madras Government were led to form the opinion that a formal investigation was imperative. According to the memorandum prepared in 1856 by Mr. Norman, Deputy Secretary to the Madras Government "the Police is a tremendous engine of oppression. The regulations are systematically set aside throughout the country. Real complaints

are unheeded; nothing can be done without extensive bribery. Complaints against Government officials are quite hopeless. The character of the high Government officials is bad. Convicted criminals are appointed to the most responsible offices. Men grossly and notoriously incompetent are posted to high appointments. New offices are created for these men. Every appointment has its price and when offices are filled by such men it is no wonder their official power is abused to extort bribes, pervert justice, oppress the weak, shield the guilty, and promote private fortunes. The Sirkar officials are not paid regularly. The Appeal court is packed. Thus is the whole channel of justice corrupt and the whole country ground under the pressure of enormous evil". The Madras Government thought that the investigation was imperative. But Lord Dalhousie sounded his warning note of annexation from the heights of Ootacamund where he happened to be at the time. Accordingly, the Madras Government wrote :—"It had become the duty of the Government to call the Rajah's attention in the most serious manner to the manifold abuses prevailing in his dominions; to urge an enlightened policy and to warn him that it was to be feared that the contingency against which Article V of the Treaty was directed was not far distant unless averted by timely and judicious reforms."

The Rajah who was filled with consternation and dismay took immediate steps to avert the impending danger. Five lakhs of rupees were taken from the vaults of the Pagoda to pay off arrears of public salary and dues on pepper supplied by the ryots. Meanwhile, the Court of Directors insisted on the appointment of a commission of enquiry into the affairs of Travancore and said that the commission "must make a minute and searching scrutiny into the entire system of the administration of the Travancore Government in all its branches, into the present position of the country, into the past proceedings of the Dewan and the Resident." But the Government of India were not then in a position to do either of these on account of the Great Indian Mutiny. In

Travancore, the difficulty was solved by the timely death of Krishna Rao and the immediate retirement of General Cullen to whom Sir Charles Trevelyan wrote thus:—"It is my earnest desire to support the just authority of the Maharaja, in his ancient dominions, and I know what is due to yourself as an old and deserving officer of this Government. But the case now before me is one on which the claims of public duty are of the most imperative kind, and I must therefore desire that you will without further delay yield obedience to the repeated orders which have been conveyed to you."

It was at this critical juncture that Sir Madhava Rao was placed at the head of the administration in 1858.

#### IV.

### Modern Travancore.

#### A PROGRESSIVE PERIOD.

The latter half of the 19th century which commenced with the advent of Madhava Rao to meet a grave crisis was an epoch of paramount importance in the history of Travancore. The commencement of the period was marked by a crisis quite analogous to the one at the beginning of the first half of the 19th century when Col. Munro assumed the duties of the Dewan conjointly with his own as Resident. This epoch covers a period of progress which takes us to the present day. It comprises the reigns of the sovereigns who have been officially recognised as Maharajahs by the Paramount Power, and as such constitutes a distinct period noted for the high water-mark of Indian statesmanship. There is a similarity between Sir Rama Varma I, the first Maha Rajah, and his successor Sir Rama Varma II, the late Maha Rajah and between the latter and his successor Sir Rama Varma III, the present Maha Rajah. Each has a generic resemblance of a great Ruler, under which his specific distinctions are arranged. Under a successive line of able and distinguished Dewans, with whom these reigns are associated, the epoch is conspicuous for great measures of reform which have placed the country quite abreast of the times.

retired towards the end of 1877 to win fresh laurels in Pudukkottah, just in the same way as his distinguished predecessor had done in Baroda. Nannu Pillai who succeeded to the Dewanate served the State well for three years when his Royal master passed away. In announcing the Ruler's demise, the Fort St. George Gazette truly said:—"His reign has been marked by the development of wise and enlightened principles of administration which have placed Travancore in the first rank of Native States".

## MAHA RAJA SIR RAMA VARMA II INTENSIVE REFORMS.

His brother Sir Rama Varma (Visakam Thirunal) ascended the throne on the 17th June 1880. He was a brilliant scholar in English and Sanskrit and a particular patron and promoter of education, progress and enlightenment. He came with quite an overwhelming passion for reforming the country and wanted therefore, a capable minister of attainments and aptitude like his own. The choice fell on Ramiongar of the British service who had been a distinguished proficient and schoolfellow of Sir Madhava Row and Sir Seshiah Sastri and whom the Maha Rajah had long known. Immediately they set about recasting the administrative machinery and remodelling it on an improved system. Important reforms in the Revenue, Judicial, Educational, Police, Medical, and Municipal departments of the State were introduced and several works of utility were carried out. Regulations, proclamations, and notifications were codified. The separation of the Police from Magistracy was an important measure of reform effected, and this was followed by a thorough reorganization of the Police and by the adoption of the British Indian Penal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code as legal enactments for the State. The civil laws too were consolidated and amended. But the most important administrative reform which will ever be associated with this reign was the promulgation of a complete and systematic scheme of scientific Revenue survey and